RELIGIONS AND RELIGION

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RELIGIONS AND RELIGION

The 43rd Fernley Lecture

RELIGIONS AND RELIGION

A STUDY OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION, PURE AND APPLIED

BY

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To the Memory of

FOUR MISSIONARIES

RELATIVE—SCHOOLFELLOW—COLLEGE FRIEND—PUPIL

JAMES EGAN MOULTON
Friendly Isles

SYDNEY RUPERT HODGE
China

FREDERICK WILLIAM KELLETT
India

WILLIAM CHARLES TUCKER
Ceylon

Laus Deo

FOREWORD

The centenary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society suggests many different lines of thought to those who would gather the lessons of the past in the hope of securing a future worthy of that past. The line I shall try to pursue is dictated to me by obvious conditions. I had clung to the hope that the honour of celebrating our centenary in a Fernley Lecture would fall to a far-sighted missionary statesman, who gave all his powers of brain and heart to the evangelizing of India, and when, after many years' devoted service, ill-health drove him home, left his mark indelibly on the Mission House as a man of vision. But the same cause that has successively terminated Mr. W. H. Findlay's direct service of the Missionary Society in India and at home has now operated to deprive us of a Centenary Lecture the quality of which the friends of Foreign Missions in other Churches could anticipate almost as surely as we ourselves. The dangerous privilege is reluctantly taken up by one who has studied the foreign field only from afar, with the memorable exception of one brief visit to the lovely islands of the West where John Baxter and Thomas Coke first planted our missionary banner. Less than four weeks' experience, even in a country where there is hardly any preaching to non-Christian people, made an immense difference to my understanding of missionary problems. Sympathy and enthusiasm I could

claim, a qualification without which no one could attempt even the humblest memorial of a century of world evangelization. But the actual sight even of a corner of the field at once helped me to realize the limitations of the home student, and gave me precious hints for their correction. If I must pursue further the personal explanation which will account for the form and contents of this lecture, I might speak of much earnest thought upon the beliefs at once of the great literary civilizations of antiquity and of primitive peoples, especially as revealed to us in the world-famous work of my friend Dr. J. G. Frazer. And in particular there has been the study of one great Gentile religion, begun in college days under that prince of Christian Orientalists, E. B. Cowell, and culminating in labours in the midst of which this book has to be written. The absorbing demands of my work upon the Hibbert Lectures,[1] from which I have to snatch a few weeks' intervals to write *currente calamo* upon the great theme of this little book, will help to account for defects that I can see in advance, at least as clearly as any reader. But perhaps the very difference between my two concurrent tasks may partially compensate for the difficulties it has involved. Fresh from an effort to delineate with scientific impartiality, and with real warmth of appreciation, the religion preached by a prophet outside Israel, I turn now to a duty in which impartiality, as pure science understands it, can have no place. I have no temptation to become an advocate, sternly impeaching other

[1] 'Early Zoroastrianism,' *Hibbert Lectures* for 1912 (Williams & Norgate).

religions. I know too well where I have learnt a profound sympathy for all humanity's groping after the divine. I shall not indulge a lofty scorn for 'superstition,' a word which I reserve for degenerate and degrading conceptions obstinately maintained by those who know better. But I shall make no pretence of concealing my conviction that there is but one perfect Religion. I shall not say very much about heathen darkness, because I believe in the Light which lighteth every man. I want to miss nothing of the spiritual illumination that shines in many dark places, for I am sure that the first great Christian missionary was right when he declared that God had never left Himself without witness. But I shall not pretend to think that these are anything but broken lights of Him who came to bring the dawning of the perfect day.

There seems to be a fitness in the surroundings amid which I begin to gather together the thoughts of many years upon a great theme. I am in the first enjoyment of my holiday, and the conditions themselves take me back vividly to my missionary brethren, as I saw some of them a year ago in the scorching tropical sun of Barbados and British Guiana, Trinidad, Panama, and Jamaica. I think of them working on so quietly and uncomplainingly, waiting long years to refresh their wearied bodies with a breath of cool English air. I picture others among Hindus or Confucians, Moslems or fetish-worshippers, toiling to acquire fluency in strange tongues, that they may tell to men whom only the Christian in them will recognize as their own kith and kin the message in which they have themselves

found life. I think of numbers of them whom I personally know—very many whom I remember with affection and pride as my own old pupils at The Leys or at Didsbury. And with yet deeper pride I recall that I am a missionary's nephew, and seek an inspiration for my work in the memory of a long life spent in the South Sea Isles, of great and varied abilities lavished in pastoral and educational labour, in massive translation work, in the anxieties of a native church guided through slow but fruitful development and upheld and encouraged through a savage persecution. How can I, with these memories about me, write with cold impartiality, as if these men had wasted their gifts on a meddlesome effort to disturb the simple savage in his hold on a religion that is good enough for him, and especially adapted to his nature? If that is to be the attitude of the Comparative Science of Religion, I have no use for it. But if such scientific study can be pursued by one who is convinced that in his own faith he holds the key to the world's spiritual history, and in that conviction can afford to look with sympathy and understanding upon all the struggles of man towards God, then it may be that our inquiry may help some reader to realize that here, as in other fields of knowledge, true scientific methods may serve to

> assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men.

And there is inspiration of yet another kind in the sights on which my eyes are feasting as I write this proem. Yonder are the wooded hills that slope down to Ullswater, beautiful even behind their

curtain of driving rain. Not far away are the 'untrodden ways beside the springs of Dove'; and the associations of this loveliest region in our fair England should give me thoughts to help my own endeavour to fathom some of the mysteries. For here is the world as God made it, by its very loveliness compelling witness that blind Chance or hard impersonal Law never held the pencil that traced these outlines. And here, too, seems to abide the immortal presence of a mind that is a far more wonderful masterpiece of the divine Artist, the poet's mind that was so perfectly attuned to the harmony of Nature's beauty. Here, surely, in uplifting communion with a great soul, and gazing on the ever-changing moods of the fair world that he interpreted so well, I may pursue some of those 'thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.' I have to ask why God's supreme creation comes through travail-pains by comparison with which the upheavals that tumbled yon mountains into forms of grandeur were but a little thing. I seek to understand how Evil invades the world of Man in forms unknown to these, God's 'lowest works,' which till man's finger touches them seem as though they never could be anything but fair. I trace the long, slow, upward progress of Man's evolution, and try to read how God implanted in His own child the germinal knowledge of Himself. I watch that knowledge grow—see it deviate too often into folly and pride and wrong, and yet see through it all a silver thread of progress, as the Father hand guides onward one who is to be no obedient automaton, but a very son of God, yielding service that is perfect freedom to a Will that is our Peace. And so I look beyond the

veil that hides from us the Unseen that is eternal, and dimly realize for myself, and if God so gives me help for those who read this book, what our eyes are permitted to see of ' a world of light eternal, where the obstinate questionings of the mind will be answered and the heart find rest.'[1]

PATTERDALE,
August 5, 1912.

I need only add a few lines of postscript, to acknowledge the kind help of friends who have read this little book in proof. The Revs. W. H. Findlay and William Goudie have helped me greatly with their profound knowledge of the work in India, and experience of the administration of a great Missionary Society. The Connexional Editor, the Rev. John Telford, and my brother, the Rev. W. Fiddian Moulton, have looked at it from the standpoint of the home ministry. And a friend from another Church, Mr. A. B. Cook, Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, and University Reader in Classical Archaeology, has given me the advantage of his learning and his deep sympathy with Foreign Missions. I need not say that I do not shift any responsibility on those who have so kindly encouraged me in a task undertaken among difficulties which caused me no little misgiving.

DIDSBURY,
May 29, 1913.

[1] J. G. Frazer, *Passages of the Bible*, preface to the second edition.

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CHAPTER I

A Century and its Lessons

Our present retrospect takes us over a period of astonishing intellectual activity. For the outburst of new ideas, and the application of new scientific knowledge to the practical uses of life, the nineteenth century is likely to retain the title of 'Wonderful' even when its achievements have been far outstripped by the still unimagined triumphs of days that are yet to be. I need not stay to elaborate a commonplace, or to point out how vast a change in our whole mental outlook has been effected by the new facts and the new theories which have accumulated with such bewildering rapidity. I will only pass in brief review the main lines of the contrast between the conditions of world evangelization now and in the opening years of the last century, that we may gather the points in which our problem differs from that which confronted the founders of foreign missionary enterprise. Most of them are all too obvious. But we must sometimes study the obvious, for we are very prone to let a false shame hold us back from due consideration of what is vital, just because we cannot hope to have anything new to say.

I

First will naturally come the transformation of the outward world. It is very significant that in all its

history Christianity has been quick to seize on the new developments of the world around and press them into service for its supreme purpose. In the early days of the Roman Empire the messengers of the new-founded Faith took full advantage of the security of travel by land and sea, the universal currency of the Greek world language, and all those other short-lived blessings which helped to mark that epoch as veritably 'the fullness of the times.' When the invention of printing threw the doors of knowledge open to the world, it was no accident that the Bible was, then as ever since, by far the first of all books in the use of the great discovery. And so in the early years of the nineteenth century, when the French Revolution had taught Europe that the gifts of life can never again be the monopoly of the few, when the terror of a detestable military despotism was nigh unto vanishing away, and Western civilization was ready to begin the great onward march towards freedom and peace, we find the new world outlook expressing itself in the simultaneous foundation of missionary societies in various Churches, and of the Bible Society that federates them all. The subsequent history of this work has shown the Church always ready to make prompt use of the inventions which have changed the face of the globe. Railways and ocean steamers, cable communication and wireless telegraphy, have made the world a strangely different habitation for us from that in which our ancestors lived. Political conditions have changed everywhere; and nearly every nation, in the old civilization and in the new, finds itself forced to accommodate itself, willingly or unwillingly, to an incipient federation of

mankind, in which whole peoples realize isolation impossible, since under the new conditions 'no man liveth unto himself.' And the Church's great work has in a thousand ways revealed her consciousness that to her by divine ordinance 'the toll of the ages has come as an inheritance.'[1] Her missionaries have rejoiced in the growing speed and facility of travel that can save them so much time upon their gracious errand. Her educators have seized for their purpose the thirst for knowledge that has come with the shrinkage of the world, and have been swift to show how their Faith is closely allied with every advance in intellectual achievement. Her healing ministries have been the first to bring into many a land the marvellous triumphs of medicine and surgery. Her statesmen, with an outlook far wider than that of secular Foreign Secretaries, confined within the particularist cares of the interests of their own single nation, have learnt to think in continents, to lay far-reaching plans for the interests of all the nations, which in their hands prove to be no longer antagonistic but identical.

The time would fail me if I tried to develop with any pretence to fullness the changes in the world's outward conditions which the 'Wonderful Century' has left behind and its successor is continuing with unabated energy. Perhaps I have really named in these few sentences all the novelties which have brought serious moral advance. A large proportion of the conveniences given us by modern invention make little difference to the deeper welfare of humanity. We think them indispensable, but we

[1] 1 Cor. x. 11, according to a rendering made probable by the language of the papyri.

should be very much the same men and women without them, and the majority of our fellows have to do without them still. But mechanical inventions which have quickened and cheapened travel, and even made travel possible and easy where it was impossible before, have had a moral influence on the solidarity of mankind. Only less revolutionary have been those discoveries of science which have done so much to master the fell power of plague and famine, and thus to make habitable large regions of the world where death held carnival of yore. In all these things we recognize ourselves in a new age, an age undreamt of by our brave forefathers, who, with a splendid faith, set out to conquer unknown continents for the Kingdom of God.

II

But if outward conditions have vastly changed during this eventful century, assuredly the revolution in the world of thought has been for our object more momentous still. There have been two or three movements of immense range which have during the past century profoundly affected the attitude of open-minded thinking men towards Christianity. That it is possible to-day to write an exposition of our faith which takes account of them all, and fearlessly welcomes their legitimate results, is not the least among the evidences that the religion of Christ is indeed founded on the rock. First in order of time came the movement which we may call by the general name of Criticism. It was based on the growing conviction that the Bible must no

longer be kept within a ring fence, preserved by its unique sanctity from processes of inquiry to which other books are subjected. The 'Lower' criticism must inquire for the Gospels as well as for Homer or Aeschylus whether we have the text approximately as it left their writers' hands, or seriously corrupted in the long process of transmission. The 'Higher' criticism must there take up the quest, and examine as rigorously and scientifically as it must for writings outside Scripture who wrote these books, and when and why and how. Traditions must be sifted and nothing taken for granted: if these books contain the Truth, God will take care of His own. And, finally, 'Historical' criticism must not shrink to come in and ask whether the sacred volume which has had long and unique influence upon the world is exempt from the possibility of errors in history and errors in science. The onward march of this new force has been attended by much misgiving on the part of men who have the best of all reasons for loving and reverencing a divine library that has taught them of a heavenly Father. Such may be forgiven if they have rebelled against a science which seems to them to lay sacrilegious hands on what has proved itself to be infinitely holy. There are 'fearful saints' in plenty who still catch with eagerness at every real or imaginary novelty by which it is thought the dreaded enemy may be driven back. To some of the very serious consequences of this movement for Foreign Missions we must return later. But meanwhile we may bid our brethren 'fresh courage take.' God has provided His own answer, and as we might expect, it is an infinitely better one than

we could devise. It is—the British and Foreign Bible Society! Through a century Criticism has been proving the Bible truly human, written by human hands in human language, and liable in unessentials to human error. Through a century the Bible Society has been proving it divine, by simply letting it speak for itself without note or comment in the languages of the whole earth. And wherever it has spoken, signs and wonders have endorsed its message. The wilderness has blossomed as the rose, the madman sits clothed and in his right mind at the feet of a Saviour present still. While miracles like these continue to attest the uniqueness of our Book, we have small reason to be angry or afraid, whatever science may determine concerning the human features of a message thus manifestly from God.

III

Halfway through the century we are reviewing there came the momentous epoch of the Darwinian theory. What the ultimate verdict of science may be upon the theory, as set forth by Darwin and Wallace, matters nothing for our purpose. If it were destined to be swept away by new theories that could better explain the facts, none the less would its promulgation mark a great turning-point in human thought. For the coming of Evolution meant a new spirit infused into every department of knowledge. Some application of the general idea of gradual and regular development, under fixed laws, came to be a demand of science in all the subjects she essayed to study. Language,

history, and institutions became objects of the new method, just as much as biology or physics. A revelation of the Reign of Law invaded every field of thought. I need not stay to show how profoundly the changed outlook affected the belief in the miraculous. We ourselves, who continue to regard the Gospels as records of history, can never look on miracle in the naïve fashion of our ancestors. We cannot any longer talk of the setting aside of Law, for intelligent Theists have freely and thankfully accepted from Science her own majestic conception. What is Law but an expression of the Will of God, as we have been able to discover and formulate it? Law is for us like Wordsworth's Duty, 'Stern daughter of the voice of God.'

> Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
> And fragrance in thy footing treads;
> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.

For us, accordingly, it is no longer possible to think of God as acting on isolated occasions apart from Law: it would involve His denying Himself. For natural laws are only, so to speak, the habits of God. But He may act in apparent defiance of all the laws we know, by applying one of the innumerable laws that we do not know. And these may include laws so exacting in their requirements that they can only operate once in all history. When we discover new laws in creation, we may be interpreting a whole series of what seemed miracles. The timid will cry out that we are explaining miracles away. To a bolder faith it will

rather seem that we are realizing how a rare and strange phenomenon had been provided for in the primaeval scheme of Law, to wait for its manifestation until a Person came who was rare and wonderful enough to set it in motion. We transfer the name of Wonderful from what He did to what He was. We are not careful to assert *a priori* that error could not invade the Gospel story, and what men call non-miraculous events assume the guise of miracle in the eyes of witnesses who had reason enough to expect miracle in the doings of such a Man. But we are in no great hurry to deny the historicity of any specific marvel; for the time may well come, as it has come apparently for many miracles of healing, when the explanation will be discovered, and a new power, perfectly 'natural' in the Perfect Man, reveal itself within that unique Personality.

Here, then, summarized in language almost absurdly brief for so far-reaching a conclusion, we try to set down the resultant in Christian thought after half a century of Darwinism. There is one more aspect of the reaction of science upon Christianity of which I should like to say a word before passing on to describe the new-born science which is the subject of this book. A distinguished Cambridge chemist, Mr. M. M. Pattison Muir, has been writing in the *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1912, upon the contrast between theological dogma and scientific theory. His language is needlessly scornful, and conveys, I fancy, a misleading impression as to Mr. Muir's own position. I quote his words because they enable me to make a statement about the nature of theological dogma which is vital to my purpose.

I have no wish to criticize Mr. Muir's definitions of scientific theory, partly because they suit my purpose excellently, and partly because (unlike some scientists) I have a rooted horror of the shoemaker who goes beyond his last. Mr. Muir tells us that science gathers facts and then makes theories to explain them, which she is ready to abandon instantly as soon as new facts gainsay them. In sad contrast to this attitude stands the 'inverted science' of theology.

> The essence of a theological dogma is its claim to be a declaration made by extra-human authority, which must be accepted by human beings as more real than any religious experiences, and more binding intellectually than any conceptions humanly formed to explain these experiences.

Now I readily admit that not a few theologians, even Protestant theologians, have regarded dogma in this light. I refer to the subject thus early, in connexion with my brief allusion to the Darwinian epoch, because I wish to dissociate myself at the outset of my argument from any such conception of the nature of Christian doctrine. Take the very foundation dogma of all, that of the Person of Christ. As I read it, this is everything that Mr. Muir declares a scientific theory to be. The Church framed her theory at the very beginning to explain facts which had fulfilled themselves in her midst. She developed it in succeeding generations, as facts of the same class accumulated. The theory explains them all, as the laws of motion explain the observed places of the planets. There are difficulties, no doubt. The irregularities of the motion of Uranus were a profound difficulty to believers in the Newtonian

astronomy. But Adams and Le Verrier had faith in a theory that had stood the test of experience; and soon a new planet swam into their ken, to be the crowning demonstration that the theory was sound. Has not the central doctrine of Christianity come to us by a very similar path? New facts, like those set forth by Charles Darwin in the last generation or J. G. Frazer in our own, have seemed for a time to shake the theory. But ere long it is found that they only confirm it. We are perfectly ready to exchange it for another which will explain the facts better—when such is forthcoming. But in view of the facts that the 'Catholic' doctrine explains, we may be excused if we expect the theory of the apostles about their Master to need future revision as little as the work of Newton. There are many other things which Jesus did beside those which are written in our Book, and the world is already full of the library that has accumulated in nineteen hundred years. There are living epistles in every land, acts of latter-day apostles, revelations of a heaven that lies around us, and gospels that tell where Jesus of Nazareth has done His work to-day.

> The life, the mind, and the personality of Jesus will not be understood till we have realized by some intimate experience something of the worth and beauty of the countless souls that in every century have found and still find in Him the Alpha and Omega of their being. For the Gospels are not four, but 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,' and the last word of every one of them is 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'[1]

[1] T. R. Glover, *Conflict of Religions in the Roman Empire*, p. 140.

IV

I turn from what is only formally a digression to make a first summary reference to the newest outcome of the scientific revolution which is to occupy us throughout this book. I have already observed that the inevitable consequences of the Darwinian Theory travelled far beyond the fields with which the great naturalist was himself concerned. This is well seen in the memorial volume with which Cambridge celebrated the jubilee of the *Origin of Species*. In that work there is an essay by Dr. Peter Giles on Darwin and the Science of Language. Let me pursue for a paragraph the lesson to be learnt from this, the only science about which I am qualified to speak in detail. Darwin knew nothing of Comparative Philology, and never consciously contributed to it. But the complete re-organization of the science, which during the last forty years has established our right to use the very term '*Science* of Language,' almost prematurely devised by Max Müller, has been profoundly influenced by the spirit of the age that Darwin opened. It is a fundamental principle of our science to-day that 'phonetic law, as such, admits of no exceptions.'[1] Here, then, is the Reign of Law again, carried up from the realm of matter into that of mind, and applied to a subject in which mechanical or quasi-mechanical action will not satisfy the conditions. Now let us note that with the application of rigorous law to human speech a new factor must be introduced, to allow

[1] For a brief popular exposition of this thesis I might refer to my *Two Lectures on the Science of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1902), pp. 15 ff.

for the conditions in which consciousness plays a part. In itself phonetic law is without exceptions—or, to state it more fully, 'The same sound, at the same period of the same dialect, does not under the same conditions change into two different sounds.' But it is obvious that irregularities in speech are very common. How do they arise? To answer the question we must get the help of psychology, for we state as the corollary of our primary law that apparent exceptions are to be explained by 'analogy.' This means that in an immense variety of words the regular form has been displaced by a conscious or unconscious association with other words to which it has been made to conform. How is it decided whether A shall be assimilated to B, or B to A? It is sheer caprice, seemingly; but even caprice has its laws, and there are usually good reasons to be found to turn the scale. The point of my illustration from a science which is concerned with a human product is that as soon as we begin to apply scientific method to the study of mankind we must remember that the idea of Law takes a very much extended meaning. We may be as insistent as in biology or chemistry upon the rigorous tracing of cause and effect, the patient collecting of facts and the restriction of our theorizing to the explanation of those facts. But while in one whole series of natural sciences we have only the phenomena of inanimate matter to study, in another we must add to them the new factor of Life, with all its innumerable manifestations; and in the highest series we add again the yet more varied factor of Mind. And one important consequence of this last complication is that an element of uncertainty is introduced which science

can never, perhaps, hope to resolve. One human mind cannot in the nature of things make unerring calculation as to the operations of another, even though by the minute study of a very large number of instances we may be able to lay down with general accuracy the lines on which the normal action will go.

It is rather surprising that science waited so long before thinking it worth while to analyse the facts of religion, at any rate in its lower forms. Superstitious beliefs and childish rites of savages were described by missionaries, mostly to bring home to Christian people the depth of darkness out of which the gospel was to lift mankind. Men of science were too busy studying rocks and plants and animals to take interest in the rudimentary forms of human thought. Sooner or later this neglected province was bound to be added to the domain of scientific inquiry; and when the step was once taken, the most amazing energy was expended on making up for lost time. The institutions of primitive religion have been minutely studied by travellers and missionaries, and the results of research classified and interpretation attempted on an immense scale. Merely to look at the backs of the superb books which fill the shelf dedicated to Professor J. G. Frazer's colossal works, *The Golden Bough*, in its nearly completed third edition, and *Totemism and Exogamy*, is to secure a vivid conception of the enormous mass of material now available for the study of the social and religious origins of mankind. To count the 2,736 pages of the seven volumes of the former work, the 1,691 pages of the four volumes of the latter, heightens an impression which reaches its climax when even desultory

turning of the pages has revealed the richness of the massive footnotes giving sources of the facts accumulated above.[1] When we pass from primitive religions to the higher ones, we have an obvious illustration of the wealth of material within our reach in the fifty volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East*. The young science may have much to learn, and its interpretations of facts may be drastically revised, for all we know, by subsequent generations. But no one could charge it with neglect of the first duty of scientific inquiry, the exhaustive gathering and classification of material.

That the Comparative Science of Religion must have immense significance for those who defend and those who attack Christian Theism has been very quickly recognized on both sides. In Germany the *religionsgeschichtliche Methode* has been diligently applied to the interpretation of Old Testament and New Testament religion, as we shall shortly see. This has been mostly the application of the study of Oriental and Greek religious ideas. The investigation of primitive religion has been the special province of English scholarship—though we must not overlook the pioneer labours of Mannhardt—and it is not surprising that in our country the influence of Comparative Religion[2] has been, in more fundamental questions still, raised by the study of books like the monumental *Golden Bough*. Of this great work a *Times* reviewer said that it had 'influenced the attitude of the human mind towards

[1] Reference may be made to my paper on Professor Frazer's recent work in the *London Quarterly Review* for January, 1912.

[2] So for convenience I shall continue to call it, though the name has obvious objections. After all, it is shorter than its alternatives, and every one knows what it means.

supernatural beliefs and symbolical rituals more profoundly than any other books published in the nineteenth century except those of Darwin and Herbert Spencer.' To a very different constituency Mr. Blatchford put forth the assertion that no one had any right to an opinion about religion till he had read *The Golden Bough*. I reserve for fuller discussion the intrinsic merits of these statements: at present it is enough to chronicle the fact that they have been made. They represent a vague, but widely current impression that Christianity is no longer the only religion that counts, the only alternative to no religion at all. There are plenty of other religions in the world, which are said by learned men to have many good points, and to be excellently adapted to the tribes that hold them. Missionaries are well known, on the testimony of gin-traders and other trustworthy and impartial witnesses, to be fussy and meddlesome fanatics, much given to the disturbance of sleeping dogs that had better be let lie, and occupied in a propaganda which spoils the native for the purposes he was obviously designed to fulfil. (For a clear explanation of those purposes the inquirer may be referred to the Indians of Putumayo, by favour of the 'civilized' Government of Peru.) In better-educated circles Comparative Religion is of interest as supplying a naturalistic interpretation of the history of a creed that has long claimed to be supernatural. The trouble of reading the *Sacred Books of the East*, even in English, is manifestly more than could be reasonably expected of one who is ready to pronounce a comparative judgement; and the way is therefore open for him to declare with

complete assurance that there are other books as good as the Bible or better. And since there are clear parallels between very primitive religions and certain features of the religion described in the Old Testament, it is possible to bring the latter down to the level of the former, and demonstrate thereby the degrading and childish character of a belief which has too long held even educated men in its outworn fetters.

V

And the Christian public, who firmly hold to their Faith and its implications—how does the new science touch them? We can see very clearly that the missionary motive, proved by the unparalleled vigour and success of the churches' foreign operations to work as powerfully as ever, has changed radically since the days when our ancestors went forth to save the perishing heathen, as the fireman risks his life to drag helpless women and children out of a blazing house. The Church no longer believes that the All-Father will doom His children to everlasting pain because we have neglected to give them His Gospel. Nor does she believe that the virtues of the heathen are only 'shining vices,' or that Truth has found a home in the Christian world alone—in that part of it, we should rather say, to which we ourselves severally belong! Comparative Religion has brought the Church at home a great access of tolerance, a gift which manifestly has more sides than one. It has helped us to a wider and truer view of God, whose presence in all human history we can realize as our fathers

could not possibly do. But is there danger lest our tolerance should weaken our enthusiasm, that we should fall into a state of what some one called 'sloppy optimism' about the non-Christian world and its need of Christ? Does our new science make us eager to believe all we are told about the beauties of some very ugly things—the profound spirituality, for instance, of Krishna's amours, and other features of the darker side of Hinduism as touched up by Mrs. Besant and her comrades? If so, we might well take alarm at the prospect for our second century of Missions.

I do not wish to turn a blind eye to dangers which undeniably threaten the home base of Missions rather seriously in some quarters. But there is an answer in one word to croakers who imagine that the missionary motive has disappeared with more enlightened views of God and the world. Those of us who were there find 'Edinburgh!' an ejaculation that has all the meaning of 'Hallelujah!' Twelve hundred delegates from all parts of the world assuredly did not travel to the Scottish capital in that memorable June, 1910, merely to bury the old missionary motive and dubiously ask if we could find a new one. The total absence of obscurantism was one of the many marvels of the first truly Oecumenical Council of modern Christendom. There were not a few in that great assembly who held very strong opinions about modernism in all its forms. But a Providence watched over their speech and kept them on lines of profit. The Conference never tried to put the clock back, never compromised the Faith by protests against free and fearless inquiry, never allowed a hint that we had lost our

bearings and knew not whither we were going and why. To the challenge of the Science of Religion Edinburgh gave clear and unfaltering answer in one of the ablest works of our time, the Report of Commission IV. on the Missionary Message. About two hundred men and women, nearly all of them missionaries, contributed material for that masterly volume, which was drafted by a thinker of rare knowledge and grasp, and diligently revised by a Commission including many of the best brains in the Churches of Great Britain, America, and the Continent. That Report alone, with such a consensus behind it, suffices to repel the notion that a new epoch of Christian Missions opens amid doubts and questionings and bewilderment.

The survey of the century helps us to realize that God has been writing His own apologetic, which we have only to translate into our native speech and carry with us into a propaganda more impassioned, more statesmanlike, more daring, than any that history has seen. We have listened ruefully to confident voices telling us that our Bible has been pulled down from its place of solitary authority, that our Creed has been shaken to its foundations by the march of modern knowledge. And the heavens have been silent: no refutation of men's proud dialectic has pealed out in thunder to silence their taunts. There has been no speech nor language; their voice has not been heard. But their line has gone out into all the earth, their words to the end of the world. The Book whose divine authority this enlightened age has so easily overthrown has quietly gone forth and worked miracles on a vaster scale than ever. It is really not worth

while to stop and argue whether these miracles demonstrate Inspiration—enough to point to country after country where this Book has tamed the savage, and demand evidence that any other book, or all other books together, can do the like. When is the Rationalist Press Association, Limited, proposing to take up the oft-repeated challenge that it should achieve the same results with its enchantments? When is it going to ship a cargo of the best literature to some island that is still cannibal-haunted, with trained teachers to enforce by Pure Reason the extreme undesirableness of a diet such as theirs? Why do these clever and convinced propagandists confine their work to this country, when they might so easily put their whole case to a decisive test, which by success would close our lips for ever? Why indeed? We know why, and so do they!

We have heard dismal proofs of the decadence of religion in Europe, and in our own land. The membership of the Churches has fallen and is falling; men are ceasing to care about another world, and are busy making this visible world more habitable. Very likely. The stream has its backwaters, and things will have to get very much worse before they match the condition of England on that day when John Wesley felt his heart 'strangely warmed.' But if religion were never so decadent in England, it is amazingly vigorous with new and hopeful life in the mission-field. The progress of the world as a whole is not necessarily bound up with the maintenance of the virility of the white races, which they have received from Christianity. We are teaching China now; it may be that some day we shall learn. Meanwhile our modern Apology may put in its

first chapter the fact that in days when faith is supposed to be languishing a vast world-wide federation has sprung up in the student class, which has realized catholic unity in the determination to evangelize the world before old age has come on those who take this watchword now.

We have mourned over 'our unhappy divisions.' The hostile world has wondered and scoffed at us, so heated over trifles, so strenuous in flouting other Christians who differ on points no outsider could hope to understand. And here again God has defended the essential unity of His Church in His own way. Let Christians only realize the supreme claim of world-evangelization, and secondary matters will soon take second place. We shall not reach external union—God forbid! Federation is incomparably better for the health and the freedom of the Church; and towards this Edinburgh unmistakably showed the way. A really living Christianity can never be uniform: it is only in the winter that the trees are nearly alike. But we are rapidly learning how to master all the real evils of division, retaining our own distinctive tenets and institutions, but working in free alliance with those who in the one central belief and purpose are one with us. I was recently a member of a small conference called to frame a working creed, which in the fewest possible words was to include all that was really vital for a declaration of Christian discipleship. We were High Church, Low Church, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist, and probably others. We discussed our problem earnestly for nearly five hours; but five minutes would have proved sufficient if we had only had to express what we all believed,

and all believed to be central. That experience of doctrinal unity will serve as an object-lesson of the principles on which the future will bring an end to the scandal of Christian disunion, and a realization of John Wesley's desire for an 'offensive and defensive alliance with every true soldier of Jesus Christ.'

Does not the century's retrospect, after all, bid us thank God and take courage?

CHAPTER II

Comparative Religion and Christian Origins

The title of this chapter would, of course, cover an extremely wide inquiry, involving nothing less than the whole trend of modern research into the doctrines and narratives of the Bible as affected by the *religionsgeschichtliche Methode*.[1] To attempt this would demand the scale of an encyclopaedia, and qualifications to which the present writer lays no claim. I only propose to make some selections which may help us to see how far really fundamental questions are affected by the new instrument of research. I shall be combining in this chapter two perfectly distinct inquiries, linked only by the fact that both arise directly out of Comparative Religion. First I ask whether the results of our science have done anything to shake the general credit of our Christian documents. Then I proceed to the still wider question, how far Comparative Religion will help us to frame a general theory of the divers manners in which God has made Himself known to men.

[1] I despair of the effort to find an English term to render this compact though rather sesquipedalian compound. 'Religious-historical method' is not English, nor clear, and 'religio-historical' is worse. 'The method based on Comparative Religion,' or, if we must be precise, 'the Comparative Science of Religion,' is the shortest form in which we can express it. It is not often that our cousins get such an advantage over us in brevity!

I

It will be convenient to approach the first question by way of the extremists who have done their best to bring the whole method into contempt. Having entertained ourselves for a few paragraphs with their learned absurdities, we can then recall that the progress of every science is attended by camp-followers of this class, who must not be taken too seriously or allowed to discredit a sound method by their extravagances. We shall thus be free to pay respectful attention to the pleas of sober science, and to accept from it what may appear to be proved.

We are suffering just now rather severely from an epidemic of the solar myth, not unlike that which raged half a century ago, and exhausted itself by the failure to find any more subjects on which to fasten. Adequate freedom from the restraints of science and common sense will enable a fertile imagination to equate any given historical name to the name of some Oriental deity, and thus to take a soaring flight into the sky, where the Signs of the Zodiac are willing to account for anything and anybody. The other day I imprudently purchased ten dozen marvellous pages by Dr. Martin Gemoll, entitled *The Indo-Europeans in the Ancient East: Mythological-historical Discoveries and Enquiries.*[1] Herr Gemoll apparently belongs to the legion of ingenious enthusiasts who have rushed down a steep place after the astral mythologists into the *Mare Absurdum.* He is convinced not only that Ahura (Mazdah, the deity of Zoroastrianism) and Asshur

[1] *Die Indogermanen im alten Orient—mythologisch-historische Funde und Fragen* (1911).

are identical, which is very possible, though not on his lines, but also that Abram, Aaron and Arthur are allotropic forms of the same element. The close relation between Monmouth and Macedon is a fact of the same order. But all this learned fooling is not a whit inferior to the elaborate argumentation of much better-known men like Jensen, who, having failed to convince scholarship by a book on the Hittites, has lately appealed to the masses with a proof that Moses, Jesus, and Paul were only variations on Gilgamesh, the mythical hero of the old Babylonian epic. An amusing feature about the recent astral mythology craze, which English readers may now follow as far as they care to do in a big book by Dr. Jeremias, is that its pioneers seem to have neglected the obvious precaution of learning some elementary astronomy.[1] The experts should have been asked when the Zodiac was first devised, and their answer would have pointed to a maximum antiquity beyond which our amateurs have cheerfully wandered many centuries.

Better known and more important than these madcap speculations, but not perhaps more plausible, are the combinations by which another recent school has demonstrated that Jesus is wholly mythical. Three nations may lay claim to this great discovery, but I shall not attempt to assign priority. An American professor of mathematics, Mr. W. B. Smith, wrote a book (in German)[2] called *The pre-Christian Jesus*,

[1] Compare a paper by Mr. E. W. Maunder, of Greenwich Observatory, in the *London Quarterly Review* for October, 1912.

[2] Professor Smith has since taken pity on the benightedness of English readers and republished the book in English under the title *Ecce Deus*. Intending readers will be careful not to confuse the book with one under the same title by the late Dr. Parker.

showing that 'Jesus' was the name of a god worshipped in Palestine a century or so B.C. A learned Englishman, Mr. J. M. Robertson, now more usefully employed in politics, wrote *Pagan Christs*, in which a mass of analogies from all sorts of fields satisfactorily explained how the Christ myth was put together. Finally, Professor Arthur Drews, of Jena, made a sensation in Germany by his *Christ Myth*, and the propaganda with which he has followed it up. His predecessors, Smith and Robertson, have supplied him with materials in plenty, including sometimes statements on points of fact which surprise experts in fields where the bold generalizer has ventured without a guide. The leaders of Liberal theology in Germany have been following Drews about, confuting from sober science a paradox which threatens to discredit the whole fabric of free and serious research. I need not, I think, waste time on expounding, still less on refuting, this truly wonderful discovery; but I may spend a sentence or two in pointing its moral. In historical inquiries it is well to remember that daily life proves abundantly the length of the arm of coincidence. The *reductio ad absurdum* applied so effectively by Whately in his *Historic Doubts* as to Napoleon's existence, and by Henry Rogers, in a brilliant apologue in the *Eclipse of Faith*, could be very easily brought up to date to expose the absurd misuse of the *religionsgeschichtliche Methode*.[1] A

[1] The day may come when students of ancient history, burrowing among the records of religious thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, may light upon the names of Robertson and Smith, dim and curious figures to whom were attributed 'doctrines that could be held by no sane man.' Will they not fasten on the fact that a real and

page of history, or a minute description of some present-day custom, could be proved mythical by setting against its several items skilfully selected parallels from ancient history, from fable or folklore. The process is facilitated by the writer's liberty to describe his parallels in terms suggested by the comparison he has in mind. It will be found constantly that this comparison exercises a powerful unconscious influence on the narrator's selection of details. Let me give an illustration, for the point is rather important. The story of the birth of Jesus in the first chapter of Matthew has been diligently interpreted by parallels from Gentile mythology. And in all the parallels, to be sure, we have a boy of wonderful character born of divine parentage from a human mother. If that were all, it might be not unreasonably claimed that the Gentile fable influenced the Jewish story, assuming that it could be shown to be familiar in the atmosphere where the latter arose. But these stories are not told in such general terms. They are full of detail, and the details are the very *raison d'être* of the story. Who could tell of the birth of Perseus and leave out Danae's brazen tower and the shower of gold in which Zeus visited her? And when thus told, the very resemblance of what we take to be the central *motif* disappears behind the picturesque setting. An attempt has been made to bring in a Persian myth as to the miraculous birth of the still future world-deliverer. It is only necessary to tell the story to see at once how grotesque is the idea of

still famous scholar, Robertson Smith, was supposed to have uttered heresies in his own day? The two little men were only distorted duplicates of the one great man!

linking it with the opening of our New Testament. The utmost that could rationally be deduced from these Gentile myths would be the possibility that in some early Christian circles the knowledge of heathen heroes who were said to have divine parentage prompted a kind of rivalry, producing a story which contained this element. This brings in a whole crop of new problems, which I need not discuss.

It might well seem that we have spent time enough on a mere disease of criticism; but for the moment the disease is endemic in certain quarters, and it will not be wise to ignore it. In a very short time probably even the Rationalist Press Association will be ashamed of the endorsement they have affixed to that and every other novel absurdity, however mutually destructive, which might seem to discredit religion. The most crushing reply to Mr. Robertson that I have seen is in *The Literary Guide* for December, 1912. It is from Dr. F. C. Conybeare, the one distinguished scholar whom the R. P. A. has lately enlisted to attack Christianity from the standpoint of biblical and patristic learning. The peculiar bitterness of Dr. Conybeare's own book will show that it is no Christian bias that prompts him to write in the Rationalist journal to refute Mr. Robertson's 'hypercriticism passing into credulity.' He enumerates in chronological order 'twelve documentary sources, independent one of the other, and all referring to, and involving, the historical personality of Jesus.' The first eight of these are from the New Testament, and all fall 'between about 50 and 120 A.D.' Dr. Conybeare makes delightful play with

Mr. Robertson's 'pre-philological' equations of names, and quotes a delicious passage in which Mary is rediscovered in Myrrha, Maia, Maira, Maya, Merris, and the Moirai—mythical figures brought together from Egypt, India, and elsewhere. I must not quote more, but content myself with the peroration:

> Enough. Mr. Robertson's explanations of the origins of Christianity are many times more miraculous than anything in the Gospels, and require of us, in order to their acceptance, far more credulity than would satisfy the present Pope.

Sometimes Satan does cast out Satan—I use the comparison without prejudice!

The other general remark I wish to make is that this universal scepticism is the inevitable though exaggerated outcome of the negative criticism of generations past. We cannot read the brilliant *résumé* of a century of criticism in Albert Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* without drawing at least the main inference which the writer means us to draw. Between them, these negative critics, who will not venture on the last logical step themselves, have destroyed piecemeal all real ground of confidence in a kernel of history in our Gospels. They were held back from abandoning the historicity of Jesus by a lingering instinct for history, which taught them that consequences must have adequate causes behind. To this extent they showed critical power superior to that of Drews and his school. But it must be allowed that in many of them also there was a hypertrophy of the critical faculty tending to destroy the historical sense. The difficulties and inconsistencies they found in the

narrative are very often indeed only difficulties and inconsistencies which abound in every concise story of real life, vanishing as soon as the story is told in full. I am almost loth to pass this judgement, for I believe heartily in a minute and faithful criticism even of the Gospel story, and I should count it disloyalty to the Gospel itself if I were to foreclose the result. But I cannot resist the impression, when I read some criticism, that it is much easier to accept the original story, with a few unsolved problems which a little imagination might account for, than to explain the existence of the myth to which for the sake of these difficulties we reduce the story. We burn the house down to roast the pig, and find that the pig is half burnt and half raw!

II

I turn, then, from the Anarchists of Criticism to the Radicals and the sober Liberals, with whom we may expect to have more sympathy, even if we cannot follow them everywhere. I limit myself to the criticism that employs Comparative Religion as its instrument. The most conspicuous of these pioneers is Professor H. Gunkel, of Berlin. His *Creation and Chaos* traced old Babylonian myths in the imagery of Genesis and Revelation, and in a few other places. This part of his work need not detain us, though it has very great interest for biblical exegesis. It supplies a source for what is avowedly figurative, and leaves practically untouched what stands as a narrative of fact. Interpreters of the old school would take exception to the

application of this method to the Book of Jonah. But it can hardly be questioned any longer, even among conservative scholars, that the book is an allegorical apologue, which uses the name of an historical prophet, but in no other respect pretends to narrate facts. The modern reading lifts this little pamphlet to the very highest level of Old Testament prophecy, and restores us 'the finest foreign missionary tract ever written.' Naturally, if its story is of this order, we gain considerably by anything that shows us how the writer secured the elements of his picture: if they came from folklore familiar to his readers, the grotesqueness of the details is both explained and condoned. Gunkel's later work, an application of Comparative Religion to the New Testament,[1] raises much more fundamental questions, in the brief compass of less than a hundred pages. I must endeavour to summarize Gunkel's position, for it is that of a school exercising great influence, and we could not have the doctrine expressed with more authority. The essence of it is that we have tried to explain the New Testament too exclusively out of the Old.

> We Christians have no foundation whatever for the assumption that only out of Israel could arise all that is good and valuable in religion. Such a Jewish Chauvinism would sound very strange on our lips. The seed of divine revelation was not sown exclusively on Jewish soil (p. 14).

Again (p. 95):

> Christianity, which was destined to be preached to many nations, was itself born of no one single nation,

[1] *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen, 1903).

> but grew out of a great and complex history of many nations. But, as Bousset puts it, 'Judaism was the retort in which the various elements were mixed.'

Professor Gunkel observes that it was a providential element in the development of Christianity that it had its classic age just when it passed from the Oriental into the Greek world, so that it took its part in both. It is frankly a syncretic religion, gathering some of its most vital doctrines, and both its sacraments, from sources which have hitherto escaped recognition. But he is very careful to provide against an unwarrantable inference.

> 'How incomparably higher in value,' justly exclaims Pfleiderer, 'are these mysteries (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) than all the mysteries of paganism!' We need in truth have no anxiety lest this historical derivation of Christianity should depreciate its value; it will only by contrast set it in the brightest light (p. 85).

Out of the study of Oriental religion in ancient times emerges the vague outline of a more or less universal syncretism, which is held to have exerted considerable influence on pre-Christian Judaism. It is admitted that the evidence is scanty, but Gunkel urges that we cannot explain the New Testament without the assumption. The Synoptic Gospels present to us a Figure which stands entirely in the succession of Old Testament prophecy. The Synoptic Jesus is too great and too simple to admit fantastic elements into His teaching: He has no use for imagery drawn from foreign mythologies. But there is, Gunkel insists, a great contrast when we turn to the Christ of Paul and John, nor will any use of the Old Testament explain it.

> How has this new element come into primitive Christianity? Not through the historical Jesus, as the Synoptists describe Him, with whom are wanting the conceptions of 'redemption, adoption, justification, regeneration, the gift of the Spirit' (p. 87).

These conceptions, we are apparently to assume, are growths from a germ supplied by Oriental religions in which the idea of redemption (*Erlösung*) is prominent. I must parenthetically express some surprise at the last item in this list of Pauline indebtedness, which Gunkel quotes from Wernle. I certainly thought I had read passages in the Old Testament, such as those which Luke quotes in Acts ii., which a thinker of far less profundity than Paul might have ventured to connect with a gift of the Spirit. But reserving criticism for a later stage, let me quote a little more to show how this able and discerning writer puts his case. Here is the answer (p. 94) to the question how the New Testament Christology—which *ex hypothesi* is an already existing system, built up within pre-Christian Judaism out of elements partly native and partly borrowed—came to be applied to Jesus:

> When Jesus appeared in His superhuman exaltation, when He won men's hearts and His disciples believed He was the Christ, His enthusiastic followers applied to Him the loftiest language that Judaism knew how to frame. But this Christology was not devised in order to probe the secret of His Person, as though Jesus were the original and the Christology secondary. Rather, souls that longed for the nearness of God, and felt their need of a Son of God manifested from heaven, transferred to Him their hearts' ideals. The New Testament Christology is then a mighty hymn which history sings to Jesus.

As Gunkel puts it succinctly just before, speaking of some mythological imagery in the Apocalypse, and the gospel picture of the childhood, the descent into hell, and the ascension,

> All this has been transferred to Jesus because it belonged to Christ before.

It would seem that it had 'belonged to Christ' for a long time, for we read (p. 78) with reference to the Servant of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah :

> There is in the last resort no other explanation than that the figure of a dying and rising God stands in the background, which Judaism adapted after its own manner, interpreted as a great Prophet of Yahweh, and adorned it with features of Israel's destiny.

The syncretism, therefore, took place early enough to enter into the history of the 'Servant' passages, a point that would repay further discussion. As this last extract raises a subject to which I want to return, I will make one further quotation, which sets it forth more fully (p. 77) :

> The history of religion teaches us that Jesus Christ is by no means the only and the first being of a divine nature in whose resurrection from the dead men have believed. The belief in the death and rising again of gods is indeed well known to the East in many places. We know it from Egypt, where it is most of all at home, but also from Babylonia, Syria, and Phoenicia. In Crete a tomb of Zeus was shown—of course an Empty Tomb ! The resurrection of these gods is originally a phenomenon of nature, interpreted as a manifestation of a divine life. The gods of the sun and of vegetation die in winter and rise anew

> every spring. There can accordingly be no question that the form in which the resurrection of the divine being is presented in primitive Christianity is the same as in those foreign religions, however widely the *content* of the belief may differ in the case of the disciples of Jesus from that found in paganism.

Professor Gunkel elsewhere expressly intimates that he is not suggesting that his comparisons invalidate the *fact* of the resurrection of Jesus. He leaves it an open question what lies behind it, hinting at the extraordinary impression made by Jesus upon His disciples as an important factor. But he thinks the form of the story has been very much affected by the influences he has been describing. Thus the ' three days ' or ' third day '—a variation which he thinks significant—has arisen from an extraneous source which is also responsible for the three days of Jonah and the three and a half of Daniel and the Apocalypse.

To enter upon any adequate criticism of this theory—a kind of inversion of the old doctrine of ' types '—would take me too far from the main purpose of the lecture, though I have felt that I could not ignore it in an attempt to show what Comparative Religion has to do with Christian Faith. It is, I think, frequently vulnerable in detail ;[1] and I doubt whether the evidence for this syncretism is always abundant enough to bear the weight laid on it. Since Gunkel and Pfleiderer themselves are emphatic on the immeasurable superiority of the Jewish-Christian resultant to the forces which

[1] The use made of Persian religion by distinguished writers of this school is a subject of examination in my *Hibbert Lectures*. The matter is naturally too technical to be discussed here.

are supposed to have set it in motion, the question occurs to us whether we might not as easily conceive such an intellectual and spiritual giant as Paul to have thought out the whole scheme, of which he is allowed to be the originator as far as concerns nearly all that really matters. (I put aside, for argument's sake, all reference to Inspiration.) Modern theories seem to me not infrequently to underestimate the capacity of individual genius, in the praiseworthy effort to discover the parentage of ideas. And in this case, if we simply take our Synoptic witnesses and abstain from weeding out of them what does not suit our theories, there were sufficient hints in the words of Jesus Himself to start a profound mind like Paul's on the quest of an interpretation. Paul himself in any case thought his interpretations came from 'the Scriptures.' Of course, if those Scriptures themselves had received influences from outside, the new theory only differs from the old in a minor matter; but Gunkel is perhaps a little inconsistent here, in that he urges that the new development of Paulinism lies apart from the Old Testament, while declaring that the most important of all the prophets was largely influenced by the same foreign elements. Apart from these considerations, for which due allowance ought to be made, I should be unwilling to reject Gunkel's general theory on *a priori* grounds. I see not the slightest reason for prejudice against the doctrine that our New Testament religion is to some extent a 'syncretism,' indebted to other religions than Judaism for pregnant hints. I am indeed very much drawn to it in the abstract, and am conscious of a distinct sense of disappointment when the evidence for particular applications

seems to fail. That the final Religion should have taken toll from the best elements in other religions, as well as from that out of which it immediately arose, seems to me a natural expectation, and one that need raise no alarm in a Christian mind.

III

One special application of Comparative Religion has been very much to the fore of late. Professors Cumont and Reitzenstein have given us most valuable researches on the 'Mystery Religions' of the early Roman Empire, which have prompted some far-reaching comparisons. In his brilliant book on Paul's earlier epistles, Professor Kirsopp Lake has gone so far as to declare that primitive Christianity was a Mystery Religion itself. In that declaration he would, of course, endorse Pfleiderer's strong expression, quoted above (p. 31), as to the incomparable superiority of the Christian Mysteries to those which are supposed to have originally supplied a motive power in their development. When we look at Baptism and the Supper in the Synoptists, we are little troubled with questions as to their origin. John the Baptist took up the obvious symbolism of washing, familiar to every Jew from the temple ritual, and significantly extended it from ceremonial to moral defilement. Anxious inquirers, after confessing their sins, were plunged in the Jordan waters, far away from any holy place made with hands, to assure them that even as they had washed away the uncleanness of the body, so would God cleanse the guilt of the

penitent soul. There is no 'mystery' here, in either technical or popular sense—only the simplest and most helpful of acted parables, giving to the troubled heart just that minimum of support from an outward action that can react through the senses on the soul. There is no evidence from the Synoptists that during the ministry of Jesus the Baptist's rite was taken up at all. We have in fact the significant antithesis, preserved for us in our oldest gospel source, between the 'water baptism' of John and the 'Spirit and fire baptism' of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel, in its one allusion to the rite (iii. 22, 26, iv. 1, 2), preserves the memory of the fact that Jesus Himself did not baptize, but tells us that the disciples did, which is clear enough from the Acts. The due subordination of the rite is retained all through the New Testament. Peter preaches to the household of Cornelius the 'true and lively Word,' but bids others administer the sacrament of baptism. Paul thanks God that he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Word. Entirely in keeping with this perfect simplicity is the Supper as it appears in the Synoptists. Even if the interpolation from 1 Corinthians in Luke xxii. 19, 20 were genuine there—which, *pace* some distinguished critics, seems to me absolutely impossible[1]—there is nothing to take the Supper out of the category of the acted parable. Just as the body needs food, so does the soul; and Jesus uses the simple symbolism of the common meal to bring home to His disciples the promise that His life, just about to be offered,

[1] Note by the way how the curious reversal of order in Luke, who on the above reading puts the cup first, reflects the order which Paul uses in 1 Cor. x. 16, though not in xi. 23 ff.

should be their divinely appointed spiritual food and drink. The new covenant, promised through Jeremiah, is to be inaugurated, like the old, with blood:[1] before another meal the Master will have passed through the gates of death to claim His kingdom. When we add to this account the words of institution recorded by Paul, we find the disciples bidden to make every common meal a fresh reminder of this, which is to be the very foundation of their spiritual life. There are those who regard this view of the Supper as in some way lower than that which we turn to next. They cannot allow it to be 'only a commemoration.' *Only!* It surely depends on what is commemorated; and when we are bidden to let every meal remind us that our Master and Lord died for us, to make His offered life the very food of our soul, I find it hard to understand what we could possibly add to the commemorative parable which would enhance its infinite value. Meanwhile we observe that in this primitive Marcan account of the Supper we have, woven into the very fabric so that it cannot be removed without tearing the whole to shreds, a declaration that the approaching death of Jesus is to be the inauguration of the prophetic new covenant between God and man, and further that it imparts a divine food to the believer. Did Jesus of Nazareth really say this on that Thursday evening in Jerusalem? We can only deny it on

[1] Note how entirely in the spirit of the Old Testament the writer to the Hebrews (ix. 16–18) brings out the essential connexion. The Greek in him (or her?) comes out in the additional illustration drawn from the only meaning that the word διαθήκη would convey to an ordinary speaker of Greek in the first century, if unacquainted with the Septuagint, that of 'testament,' 'will.'

subjective grounds. He 'could not' have said it, because we have here a foreshadowing of the doctrine of redemption! If that argument proves unconvincing to those who have a prejudice in favour of conclusions derived from evidence, we ask next in what respect Paul was an innovator.

But my present text is the Mystery Religions, and I come back to them by the obvious remark that the sacraments in the subsequent history of Christendom have travelled a long way from what I have depicted as the Synoptic Gospels' account of them. To the great majority of professing Christians to-day—for when it comes to counting heads, uncompromising Protestants are like Isaiah's 'remnant'—the sacraments have in full what constituted the essence of the Mysteries. They are acts which must be performed according to certain fixed traditional rules, and they bring spiritual gifts in what is sometimes a purely magical way. The eternal salvation of a helpless infant may be imperilled by our neglect to pour water on its brow and utter the Triune Name. The 'validity' of the Eucharist depends on the 'orders' of the 'priest' who 'consecrates' it; and for the thoroughgoing inheritor of the old Mystery Religion the Anglican Bishop is as incapable of transmitting the mystic prerogative as the President of the Wesleyan Conference. This is, of course, sheer syncretism. In this, as in a host of other points in which the Pope and Peter do not agree, Rome has carried over from old religions a mass of ideas which have no possible affiliation to the Gospels. Now, as I shall be urging presently, that does not in itself carry with it

condemnation. When we are dealing with means of grace, the only thing that matters is the grace. If that really comes, all is well: the only wrong is when a man who gets grace by another channel than that which supplies his brother insists that his own is the sole way appointed of God. Protestants as well as Romans sometimes forget that the wind of God bloweth where it listeth, and that He fulfils Himself in many ways. The Mass has no doubt a 'heathen' ancestry. But in the eyes of the angels there is no difference that matters between the devout Roman kneeling before the altar and the devout Quaker feeding on Christ while he eats his supper at home. Our own practice differs widely; but we can thankfully acknowledge that the Real Presence is as sure for each of them as for ourselves.

But granted what is fairly obvious, that the so-called 'Catholic' idea of the sacraments has an exceedingly close relation to the old Mystery Religions, we have to ask on which side Paul stands. Is he implicated in the connexion with the Mysteries? In itself we need not regard the question as very serious. Paul's intensely receptive and yet original mind was quite capable of taking a suggestive hint from the world in which he worked. Nor was the first and greatest of missionaries wanting in that sympathy which comes only after zeal in the list of the missionary's qualifications. The implication of Paul's constant references to the Greek games has been well brought out in recent work. The fact that the Isthmian festival was closely bound up with Greek religion did not prevent Paul from drawing lessons from it for the

Corinthian converts, and doing it in language which betrays real interest in the many fine features of the national institution. That religion which he came to supplant was the only way the people had of approaching God ; and if in their Mysteries they found their souls lifted above the material world into fellowship with Something which they worshipped in ignorance but yet sincerely, we may be sure that Paul looked on with thankfulness, and was ready to extract from their worship the permanent and precious elements that could be lifted into a higher sphere. The difficulty comes in when it is said that Paul carries over that practically magical element which made the mere act operative in itself. It is claimed that he regards baptism as a rite of initiation which produces, instead of merely symbolizing, incorporation into Christ ; that he finds such awful significance in the act of eating and drinking what represents the Lord's body and blood that he thinks the death of some members to be a judgement on them for unworthily partaking. The question needs extremely careful handling, for we are conscious of about equal unwillingness to desert Paul and to believe in magic. Professor Lake has raised a question really fundamental for Protestantism, which, if the matter stood as it was put in the last sentence, would certainly have a serious dilemma to deal with. I must not deviate into a discussion of the question here,[1] but will content myself with a line or two. No one can read Paul without

[1] The reader may be referred to a recent series of papers in the *Expositor* by one of our foremost Paulinists, Professor H. A. A. Kennedy.

realizing how intensely symbolic is his thought. The symbol and the thing symbolized seem for him to be so intertwined that the language of one can be transferred to the other. There is a striking contrast between this artificial habit of thought, the product of Rabbinic training, and the thought of Jesus, which always ran in parable. For Him everything had its parable: beneath the surface of all phenomena He saw resemblances which illustrated the manifold aspects of the kingdom of God—the seen only the obverse of the unseen, linked with it by the unity of Him who created both. Symbol may be said to be parable crystallized. The latter is perfectly elastic, taken up for a momentary purpose, to illuminate a single point, and put aside for another illustration which is to keep us from forgetting how many facets there are in the jewel of Truth. In minds of a certain temperament, largely resulting from the religious environment of earlier years, what once had all the freedom of a parable is worked up again and again, till a symbol emerges which is liable to be almost confused with the reality that underlies it. If, then, Paul had come to dwell on the symbol of the Supper till the intense 'remembrance' it brought with it made the bread and wine melt away into a vision of the broken Body and the poured-out Blood, we can hardly wonder if he thought that an irreverent and thoughtless treatment of a symbol so awful would bring condign judgement on one who had counted common the Blood of the Covenant with which he might have been sanctified.

Now, this line of treatment has, I am well aware, the nature of a compromise, in a matter where

good Protestants are not very much inclined to compromise. There are two fundamental varieties of temperament which separate serious and thoughtful men into two camps in all departments of life. Liberals and Conservatives, men of progress and men of caution, men of the future and men who canonize the past—we know both types in politics, in science, art, and learning. We know that both are indispensable, and ought to recognize how much each needs to be corrected and supplemented by what the other can give. And in religion these temperaments tend to what we call Protestant and Catholic—thoroughly bad names both, but made almost inevitable by use. It would seem that the love of symbol is one of the hall-marks of the latter type of mind. Speaking as an ultra-Protestant, who nevertheless tries his best to understand and appreciate a temperament opposite to his own, I should say that our habit of thought naturally looks away from symbol towards parable as a richer and freer means of grace. And yet I have just frankly allowed that Paul is here on the other side—Paul, whom Luther re-discovered and built on him the very foundation doctrine of Protestantism! Well, I do not grudge our 'Catholic' fellow-Christians their share in Paul. For the features of the two temperaments are happily not mutually exclusive, and there is not a little crossing of the tendencies characteristic of each. Otherwise the Conservative Free Churchman and the Radical Anglican or Roman would be impossible incongruities, and our politics and our church life alike would be the poorer. It is just as well that we should recognize that the roots

of all our later divisions lie deep in human nature as visible in the New Testament itself. The best side of the 'Catholic' has most affinities with Peter and James, who could never quite abandon a hallowed past, and loved the rites and rules of the Church of their fathers, even when they had been superseded by fulfilment in the Christ. And we recognize our spiritual ancestor in Paul, who so joyfully threw over ceremonies and holy days and mystic rites of immemorial antiquity, and boldly flung himself on justification by faith alone. Yet there are some of us Protestants who find the Epistle of James profoundly satisfying and entirely Protestant.[1] It is no great mischief if we in our turn concede that in his love of symbol Paul belongs to the other side. The New Testament age, of course, shows these cleavages only in their initial stage. Men were too near to Jesus to suffer the harm which the exaggeration of these human tendencies was to bring. We shall draw nearer again, it may be, to that one source and spring of unity, and then even these fundamental differences will lessen. And the way to that unity will be by the common work on the evangelization of the world.

IV

I pass on to another aspect of the Science of Religion, which has, however, been foreshadowed by several points already made. From the time of Justin

[1] This, of course, implies that the Epistle of James is really by the Brother of the Lord.' Why I think so, and how I try to meet the difficulties of the Epistle, I have set forth in the *Expositor* for July, 1907.

Martyr onwards men have noticed the startling parallels between the deepest Christian verities and some very conspicuous ideas of paganism. The earliest theory accused the devil of the caricature. For various reasons the theory is out of favour just now; and alternative theories, which our age regards as more plausible, are fluttering the hearts of sundry enthusiasts, who cherish the fond hope that at last an explosive has been devised powerful enough to make a breach in the wall of the Jericho they hope to storm. The case in brief stands thus. One large volume of *The Golden Bough* bears the title *The Dying God*. It contains a massive collection of examples, gathered from all over the world, to show how primitive man conceives a divine power to reside in kings, and provides against the weakening of it through age and decay by killing the divine man while still in his prime, and passing on his spirit to a successor. Out of this strange notion arose a great variety of uses and beliefs, all centring on the general conception of a god in human form, who is destined to die and rise to new life. Even in the higher religions there were myths which preserved survivals of this primitive belief. One of them has been already alluded to, the Cretan Tomb of Zeus. It may be easily imagined that the deeper thinkers rebelled against such a degradation of the idea of deity. Dr. Rendel Harris has been fortunate enough to discover in Syriac what can be shown to be derived from four hexameter lines of Epimenides, the Cretan philosopher, who migrated to Athens in the sixth century B.C.

> A grave have they fashioned for thee, O Zeus, highest and greatest—the Cretans, always liars,

> evil beasts, idle gluttons. But thou art not dead, for to eternity thou livest and standest, for in thee we live and move and have our being.[1]

Since, then, the world was already possessed of the idea that divine saviours brought blessing to men by dying and returning to life, there is *prima facie* room for a theory that the disciples of Jesus won back their belief in their Master's divine mission, shaken by the staggering blow of His death, by transferring to Him the popular idea, and making the human Prophet fulfil the hopes so pathetically reposed in Him, by becoming a God doomed to die. Such a theory might even be put in a form entirely consistent with the Church's central doctrine: the popular belief would thus become the providential instrument through which the first Christians came to realize their foundation truth. I do not think this is required by the facts; but I can quite believe that this widespread conception was a real help to the spread of the Gospel in some parts of the early mission field. There are other less plausible forms of the theory based on the 'dying God' of anthropology, agreeing in their achievement of a 'naturalistic' account of Jesus of Nazareth. As has been already noted, the extremists use the new material to dispose of the whole story: Jesus is a God from the first and nothing else—the Cross is as mythical as the Manger,

[1] I have quoted this because of its twofold citation in New Testament passages bearing Paul's name, Titus i. 12 and Acts xvii. 28. I am tempted to a new punctuation of the latter verse: 'For in Him we live and move and have our being (as some even of your own poets have said), for we are also His offspring.' The parenthesis applies to the words on each side of it. By the way, Mr. A. B. Cook tells me the Tomb of Zeus in Crete is still called by this name, and the site marked by a chapel of 'the Lord Christ' (Αφέντης Χριστός).

and the Docetists of early Christendom are at last outdone.

There are other related uses of anthropological material affecting various parts of the biblical system of religion; but for my purpose it will be enough to describe and examine the one which cuts deepest. Why we cannot accept a theory which makes us regard the Gospels as records of mere myth, or one which transforms the Jesus they describe either into an unreal Man, or into a mere Man and nothing more, has been argued already. We are pledged to no dogma, supernaturally announced, and binding our intellects by an authority we cannot escape. For us the infallibilities are gone, and we are glad to see them go. For we can see clearly that God meant nothing to intervene between our souls and Truth—no Church, no Pope, not even a Bible: every man is responsible directly to God for what he believes. But we do not find that the new theories help us any more than the old to explain the facts. That the Carpenter of Nazareth was as real a Man as ourselves, but a perfect Man, since He was the very God manifested in human flesh, is a theory which still explains the facts as no rival theory will. And therefore we have to ask whether we cannot form a theory of our own which will correlate the new facts with the old.

V

Our theory will depend ultimately on the view we take of the manner in which God has spoken to man. We know how He speaks now. It is a voice

within the soul, often intensely real and vivid and unmistakable, but in form and mode of presentation not differing from other thoughts. There are rare occasions when the senses appear to be affected, and external sounds or sights bring the conviction home. But no one would wish to put such experiences into the category of the miraculous, as the man of the world understands the term. God speaks within the nature His own hand framed, and speaks through the laws of that nature, which we may reasonably suppose He laid down so as to provide for this highest of all the purposes they were ever to serve. And of course His own immanence was to be the mightiest and most vital of all the conditions under which those laws of man's development were destined to work. We have seen already, and shall have to reiterate often, that God's laws can never be imagined as acting apart from Himself. If all this is true, we must expect to find Revelation following the lines of human nature, these lines having been designed by the Creator to make a way not only for the minor ends of man's existence, but also for that which if real at all must be the supreme end, the understanding of God. Does it not follow that when God prepares the climax of His providences, whereby man is to be taught the very utmost about God that he can ever learn, He will bring into it all the most characteristic lines along which human thought has groped towards the divine? Men have travelled by many diverse and strange roads on their quest after God. But if the journey has been guided by the deep instincts of human nature, which has a wonderful unity all the world over, it is not strange if all those

roads prove to go straight towards the 'green hill far away.'

This *a priori* argument is strengthened by a consideration drawn from one of the first principles of anthropological science. The novice, reading any section of an encyclopaedic work like *The Golden Bough*, finds it almost impossible to believe that the scores of parallel uses described there can be independent. But they come from all ages of history, and from every part of the world; and the emphatic decision of the man of science is that their similarity results only from the fact that the human mind has been working upon the same outward conditions, and has shown its own general unity by reaching similar conclusions. When, therefore, we find so strange an idea as this of the Dying God figuring all the world over in forms which vary just enough to make their independence plain, we are driven to the conclusion that there is something in it which starts from first principles, and comes out of the central instincts of humanity. It is a note harsh and crude enough, as we hear it from the rude instrument of the primitive savage. But it is after all the same note as that which sounds, rich with harmonics, and modulated with all the variety of a hundred stops, from the great organ at the touch of a master hand. When God chose that way to deliver man, He chose a way that human thought knew how to tread. Nothing is more impressive about the Christian mystery of Atonement than the fact that it is conspicuously hidden from the wise and understanding, and revealed unto babes. The trained thinker, however devout,

wrestles with its intellectual difficulties, and will often remain for years utterly dissatisfied with the multitude of efforts that have been made towards its interpretation. One theory after another he will take up and throw aside—there is so much unreality and make-believe in them all! Yet he knows that the simple savage can take in the great Fact as good news that goes straight to his heart, and never bewilders his mind. And when the thinker himself talks to his little child about the love of Jesus in dying for him, he is not conscious of his difficulties, which belong to theology, not religion—the intellectual interpretation, not the fact to be interpreted. All the time, while his mind is still agnostic, almost prepared to declare that the mystery is guarded in the mind of God, and was never meant to be known by man, he is able to join with reverent thankfulness in the child's hymn:

> I am not skilled to understand
> What God hath willed, what God hath planned;
> I only know at His right hand
> Stands one who is my Saviour.

What I have said about the central doctrine of Christianity—central theory, if we are to be precise, for I have shown that it makes no difference—applies to the whole range of religion. Our new science enables us to write a new chapter of the *Praeparatio Evangelica*. We have learnt from physical science the general formula of evolution as describing what we know of the Creator's method in the material world. Research is yearly modifying what science understands by the formula; but

that does not concern us, as the central principle does not change. We have seen this principle of evolution applied successively to other departments of knowledge, and to human institutions. And we naturally ask, Is there to be one exception to the rule, one side of man, and that the most important, cut off from the operation of a divine law? When special creations have mostly disappeared from our history of the material world, are special revelations to remain—except possibly under unique conditions where laws are working which we have no power to fathom? Is it not reasonable to expect that if evolution is a good enough method for God to employ everywhere else, it will be good enough for Him in the crown of all His work? Not by objective, external, authoritative voices, compelling an unintelligent assent, will He speak to those whom He created in His own image. He attains His supreme object when, after age-long processes have developed matter and force, life, consciousness, mind, and will, He has worked upon will in the only way worthy of it. So He lets those instincts work which were evolved under His eye, and they bring a dawning consciousness of the divine. We need not categorically deny that what men call the miraculous has ever entered into the history of revelation. But we are free to believe that the evolutionary mode has been the normal. And we can believe this because we have come to understand evolution in a theistic light. All things have reached their present condition by evolutionary process; but God has been as vitally present throughout that process as He was in the framing of the evolutionary law.

There is something in the recognition of this new light which is very beautifully congruent with the scriptural teaching as to the dignity of man. God deigns to call man His 'friend,' and the essential element of this relation is explained to be that God does not issue mere commands as to a slave, but makes His purpose clear as to a being whom He would set by His side in glory. In that profound chapter where Abraham, 'the friend of God,' pleads with Jehovah for the righteous who may be in Sodom, He invites the patriarch's prayer in the words, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?' And to His disciples on the eve of the Passion Jesus says, 'No more do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. You I have called friends, because I have made known to you all that I heard from My Father.' We were not intended to receive even God's own truth by a mechanical or external revelation. That reason which God's creative power brought into slowly-won perfection was to be the medium through which we were designed to learn of Him who made us for Himself, so that our hearts should be restless until they rest in Him.

VI

One of the assured results of scientific anthropology is that religion is universal among men. Of course to establish that thesis we must start from a definition of religion. In formulating this we must be careful to avoid the error of those who will not accept anything as religion unless it conforms to the standards

of what we know religion to be. For us it can be nothing less than what is expressed in Professor Harnack's beautiful words,[1] 'Eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God.' But to demand this, or a tithe of it, as the minimum attainment before religion can be recognized at all is as reasonable as to attempt a definition of life, and insist on everything that life means for a man in the fullness of physical and intellectual powers. After all, the amoeba is *alive*! The definition of religion I shall adopt is Professor E. B. Tylor's 'minimum'[2]—'the belief in Spiritual Beings.' Why I cannot consent to include worship will appear presently. That no people has ever yet been observed in which the sense of the supernatural is wholly wanting may be asserted with complete confidence; and it gives us all we need for our task of tracing the upward progress. How did this recognition of the supernatural first arise among men? There have been sundry theories, mostly invented and accepted under the impression that they were a substitute for the doctrine of divine revelation. From what I have already said it will appear that Christians have no *a priori* grounds for rejecting any one of these theories. *The Evolution of the Idea of God* is a title which the writer of the book so named doubtless meant to be a challenge. It need not disturb us in the least. If we speak of the 'evolution of man' we do not imply that man is a chimera; and the idea of evolution itself was after all 'evolved' by a process which has many points of contact with that which is the subject of this chapter. For myself, I am not only prepared

[1] *What is Christianity?* p. 8. [2] *Primitive Culture*, i. 424.

to choose one of the theories: I am not sure that they are mutually exclusive. More than one of them may very well have contributed to the dawning of religious consciousness in one part of the world or another. Dreams are one suggested source. The savage always regards dreams as experiences of reality; and the continued existence of departed ancestors or friends might easily be one of many ideas of the supernatural impressed upon his mind through a dream. Apparitions—whatever be the reality to which they correspond—would be an influence in the same direction. There is also the instinctive effort to explain the energies of Nature. Why does the sun rise and set, the river flow, the rock crash down, the tree sway about in the wind? Surely because they are *alive*, in the same sense that the man is alive who can move as they do. And how does man exercise that power? There comes a time when he 'dies,' when the body that could walk and eat and speak lies still and helpless, for the breath has gone out of it. The breath or 'spirit,' then, makes the difference, and this it is that must account for the movements and energies of the world around. Hence what we call 'animism,' the recognition of a spirit in all material objects, animate or inanimate, by which they go their ways and do their deeds. In this way the world becomes peopled with spirits, a background of vague and generally dreaded possibilities, the dangers arising from which man must avoid and repel as best he may.

These last words suggest our next step. Primitive man has become convinced that the world is full of spirits. How is he to secure what he needs,

with uncertain powers around him which may refuse the gift? Will the spirit in the sun give light and heat, that in the cloud give rain, that in the seed consent to sprout and grow and ripen for his food? According to Dr. Frazer's theory, man's first expedient was to control the powers of Nature by operations of magic. By an exercise of child-psychology, it was assumed possible to command these natural forces by imitating them. To bring rain you pour water on the ground, torture a human victim till he weeps copiously, or take the 'green man'—a man enveloped in grasses or boughs, representing the vegetation spirit—and souse him in a brook. To recruit the energies of the sun after midsummer, you kindle 'St. John's fires.' And so on, through a strange gamut of customs which still survive in country-places even in England, their ancient meaning long forgotten, but the practice still preserved 'for luck.'

But the time came when men began to realize that this naïve way of bringing rain—let us keep to this one case for simplicity's sake—did not achieve its purpose. The day was slow in coming. One occasion when by coincidence the charm worked obliterated the memory of twenty failures. And the system had produced a class of experts, rain-makers, who knew the accumulated lore of generations; and these were sadly wanting in the first principles of their science if they could not suggest excellent reasons why the charm had failed. But this could not go on indefinitely. At last the 'despair of magic,' as Professor Frazer puts it, produced a new method. If those powerful spirits that gave or withheld the rain could not be coerced,

perhaps they might be entreated. Magic failed, and by its failure produced religion.

Thus far Professor Frazer. Without stopping for criticism, I am tempted to stretch the theory a little further. What happened when prayer also failed? A primitive people driven into a rainless country, or unable to migrate from a country where rain was failing, tried magic in vain, and then found that the spirits could not be entreated. Should we not expect in such cases a 'despair of religion'? And that in fact is what we practically find in many places. The Australian aborigines, for instance, have in some of their tribes traditions of divine beings whose work lies in the past. They worship them not at all, having found, I suggest, that the worship was vain.

We can hardly frame a satisfactory theory of the development of religion without allowing for the cases of degeneration and decay. We know all too well that if religion is universal among primitive peoples—as it certainly is, except for cases like the Australian just cited, where belief survives, but worship has disappeared—it is very far from universal in civilized lands. The fact is that religion tends to a position of unstable equilibrium as it climbs higher: the purer and more precious it becomes, the more it needs of effort to maintain it. Let us go back to our example. The primitive people we have postulated gave up magic, and then prayer, as they found neither productive of the result they needed. Perhaps they found that they could store the precious rain, and this accelerated their abandonment of the religious method. Such a people would be at the parting of the ways. Prayer, having

failed to bring them rain, might be simply given up. The divine beings then would be remembered, and a mythology preserved, especially to account for the world's creation. But they would be gods after the order of the deities of Epicurus, so vividly portrayed in six wonderful lines of Lucretius.[1] As when a great ship is launched a silken cord is cut which releases the vessel to glide down the slipways into the water, but the hand that launched controls it no more, even so in many a theory, and more abundantly in practice, the only place for God is 'in the beginning.'[2] But the crisis might result very differently. The practice of prayer had not brought rain, but it had brought other things of greater value. In that way the very failure of religion brought a higher form of it.

I hope that what I have already said may have disarmed some of the very natural prejudice which may exist among Christian people when confronted with theories of the origin of religion appearing to them to leave out the supernatural. That a theory really leaving out the supernatural would make small appeal to me is, I trust, needless to affirm. My own position in this, as in many other applications, is that the 'natural' *is* supernatural, that a logical and thoroughgoing Theism must see God in the normal, and not look for Him only in the abnormal—or what we think to be abnormal. We cannot be afraid of the Reign of

[1] The lines (Lucr. ii. 646 f.) quoted with thrilling effect by Gladstone in the House of Commons, in his speech on the Affirmation Bill (April 26, 1883).

[2] Compare various missionary testimonies from animistic countries in *The Missionary Message*, p. 25.

Law when once we have come to realize that it is *His* Law. And when we are warned off these 'naturalistic' theories of the genesis of religion, we are bound to ask what alternative is offered. Are we to go back on a use of the opening chapters of the Bible which—if only we would recognize the fact—owes more to Milton than to Moses, and declare Faith's demand that God's self-revelation to primaeval man should be regarded as differing in no material respect from our Lord's teaching of the Twelve, except in the range of the truths conveyed? Can we not see that such a conception of revelation—quite apart from the anthropomorphism inherent in it—lowers our thought of God? The precious treasure was committed to earthen vessels indeed! Sin broke the fellowship that once existed between God and His children, and Truth was hopelessly lost except in a dwindling minority of the race. Nor was it the fault of these people that they relapsed into darkness. The fathers ate sour grapes, and their children's teeth were set on edge. Is it not a more reverent theory which makes revelation come slowly, like intelligence to a child? The Judge of all the earth will do right towards men who did not and could not know. The All-Father can be trusted to act in love to His offspring who never grew up into a perfect knowledge of Him.

VII

But I must hasten to deal with another question that will necessarily be asked by those who cannot lightly yield what has seemed to them to stand in

the Bible. What of the religion of Israel, and the uniqueness of the revelation contained therein? Is this to be explained on a 'naturalistic' basis? Well, only in the same sense of the word as we have met before. We can understand the place of Israel in the history of religion most satisfactorily if we compare the place of some other nations in other departments of human life. Whence has the modern world received, directly or mediately, nearly all its intellectual stimulus—its unapproachable models in art, its foundations in science, its inspirations in literature? From Greece of course, and in Greece from Athens first, with other Greek communities very far behind. One little people was dowered with intellectual gifts such as no people in history has ever rivalled or approached, and through that people the modern world has been intellectualized. Whence come our national systems of law? How has the Europe of to-day learnt the secrets of order and government, the power to mould and administer a State? From the political and legal genius of ancient Rome. The voice of Providence gave the decree—

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento!

And the struggle of mediaeval Europe with barbarism owed its triumphant issue to the Romans' keeping of that charge. The examples could be extended, but these outstanding ones help us to realize the law by which nations ascend on high only to receive gifts for men. Be it noted also in these examples that while the general level of national capacity must be high, by far the largest part of the nation's characteristic work is done

by the few. The nation must be worthy of its great men, must be able to appreciate, follow, and support them ; while for the very production of a succession of great men a high average quality is necessary in the people as a whole.

We have only to apply this manifest principle of God's providence to the development of religion, and we shall secure an approximately adequate idea of the part Israel played in bringing the highest of all gifts to the world. The genius of Israel was supremely adapted for the place of missionary of religion to mankind. Israel had no primacy of intellect, and still less genius for politics. But the bond between religion and ethics was closer in this than in any other nation. The national conscience was more sensitive, and ready to respond to an unparalleled degree when the appeal of Right was made in the name of God. We are familiar with depreciatory estimates of the children of Israel as they were and as they are to-day. Mr. Houston Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* supplies a notable example. But most of the hard things that are said of the national character in Old and New Testament times are only the shadows cast by a light incomparably brighter than any that shines elsewhere. If the people did incur the guilt of killing the prophets, it is also certain that no other people followed or even tolerated prophets so long, or yielded such instant and general obedience when a solitary man of humble rank came forth and denounced old-established customs or profitable wrong-doing in the name of the nation's God. Their faults were many and grave, but when we begin to compare

them with other nations we have no difficulty in understanding how much better fitted they were for the work to which the call of God and their own character and training marked them, the foundation-laying of the world-religion.

Such was the soil out of which prophecy arose, by far the most wonderful and fruitful growth in all the long history of religion. It is no part of our case to assert that Israel had a monopoly of this great gift. Socrates, Gautama the Buddha, Confucius, Zarathushtra, even Mohammed, though one gives him the name rather less readily, are prophets by every title that the Science of Religion or true Christian insight can recognize; and the 'goodly fellowship' has its members, famous or obscure, in every land and every time. But the prophets of Israel outclass those of all other countries in number and quality alike. Judged solely by their penetration into the most vital truths of religion, Moses, Samuel and Elijah, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the authors of *Jonah* and the central section of *Isaiah*, stand higher than any of the great names I mentioned just now. And it must be remembered that many of the greatest of the Gentile prophets stood virtually alone in their own people, while Israel had an almost unbroken succession. Parsism, with a doctrine of God purer than any Gentile faith possessed, might have become a world-religion if only Iran had produced men worthy to follow and extend the work of Zarathushtra. Islam has become a world-religion, because it has had a succession of true prophets, many of them of higher character than the founder himself, though behind him in genius, and to us mostly unknown. The most

instructive comparisons for our purpose are those with Greece and India. It need not be proved that Socrates was very far from standing alone in his country. Readers of such a book as the late James Adam's *Religious Teachers of Greece* know what a splendid succession there was of men who thought deeply about God, and taught lessons that were permanent additions to the spiritual wealth of mankind.[1] But while many of them were for sheer intellect on a higher plane than almost all the prophets of Israel, it is not hard to see the superiority of the latter in qualities needed for the propagation of a universal religion. True and ideal religion is the training of the human will into obedience to the perfect will of God:

> Our wills are ours—to make them Thine.

Both the intellect and the emotions have their part to play in the training of the will, but the former has notoriously a second place: it is a truism that religion is of the heart more than of the head. The Greeks lived in an atmosphere too exclusively

[1] I am tempted to add a reference to a less familiar source for the study of Greek religion, which in its resemblances and its differences is very instructive. A black marble column of the age of Hadrian, found near Lindus, in Rhodes, gives the conditions on which men may enter the temple before which it stood. 'First and foremost, being pure and healthy in hands and mind, and with no consciousness of wrong-doing.' How much the first combination resembles Heb. x. 22! Cleanliness was even in Christian worship a worthy emblem of godliness—what else did baptism originally mean? Then the stone deals with 'the things external,' and names the number of days within which men may enter after divers pollutions. Three successive lines will illustrate the whole: 'After eating cheese one day, after abortion forty days, after family bereavement forty days.' The juxtaposition is like that in Acts xv. 20, of which it is often noted that Jews thought these pollutions equally grave and Gentiles equally trifling.

intellectual. Conduct was never their strongest point —here the Romans in their best age surpassed them far. They were destined to make very important contributions to the development of Christianity, but their time was not yet. And India—land of profoundest thinkers, ascetic devotees, dreamers and mystics without number—why could not India compete with Israel in the supply of prophets who might teach the whole world? Compare India with Greece, and we see at once the masculine logic which saved Greece from sinking in a bottomless ocean of sheer abstraction, powerless to influence for good the conduct of life or stimulate any useful activity. India has always been far more religious than Greece or any Western nation: religion with her has taken up a larger arc of the periphery of life, and she has pursued it with incomparable earnestness. Her time is not yet, but it is coming. Israel was free from philosophy and mere intellectualism on the one side, from dreamy mysticism and profitless asceticism on the other. Beyond every other qualification, Israel, through the prophets, learnt to bring religion into indissoluble union with conduct, of which religion became the supreme inspirer and controller. Greece never learnt this lesson, India still less; and in this fact alone we can see the main answer to our question. We look at Israel not for prophets or psalmists, but for the fact that 'of him was Christ after the flesh.' The supreme Teacher might have been born in Athens or Benares. How that would have affected His humanity we need not speculate. If we could imagine that there would have been no difference in Him except the substitution of Attic or Sanskrit

for the Galilean Aramaic and colloquial Hellenistic which He spoke, there would still remain the question whether His disciples would have been equal to the task of preaching Him. The success of the Christian propaganda depended on the providential fact that centuries of semi-conscious preparation had made the messengers of the new faith ready, and provided a deeply religious and high-principled people, scattered all over the Roman Empire, waiting to form the nucleus of the Church of their Messiah. In tracing thus the chain of cause and effect which marked out Israel for a position of unique privilege and unique work, we have been following principles wholly scientific. Comparative Religion may exclaim, 'This is evolution,' and we are not minded to dissent. We can still cry, 'This is the finger of God.'

I do not wish to trespass on the province of my namesake and predecessor, and discourse elaborately on 'The Mission of Israel,' which he has so well described in a former Fernley Lecture. I restrict myself to those aspects of it which Comparative Religion can illuminate. And firstly let me venture one more remark on the characteristic institution I have just been discussing. What is the place of prophets in a scientific account of human progress? The comparison of prophets with poets is obvious, and it gives us some true and valuable ideas. A great mass of poetry, even of great poetry, has manifestly no prophetic note in it. But although there is a function for the 'idle singer of an empty day,' as one of the most fascinating of the brotherhood calls himself, and for the poet who only tries to enshrine conceptions of beauty, there

can be no question that in his highest work the poet is a prophet, and speaks a message to men which helps them to nobler ideals. For our purpose it will be more suggestive to seek a less hackneyed comparison. Prophets are in the spiritual sphere what inventors or discoverers are in the material, or in the world of knowledge. Our material civilization has been developed partly by slow improvements, each advancing almost imperceptibly the resources already enjoyed, but more by sudden and mighty strides of inventive genius, which devises some totally new thing. The prehistoric original of the Prometheus myth, who first found how to kindle fire, the latter-day inventors of steam-engine, wireless telegraphy, or antiseptic surgery—all these have advanced civilization's resources *per saltum*. Similarly in the sphere of abstract knowledge, advance is made partly by the plodding industry of a multitude of inquirers, each content to add his tiny contribution, and partly by the daring intuitions of genius, which at a leap will transform the whole outlook in some province of knowledge. What is allowed without question for these discoverers should be allowed at least as easily for discoverers in the spiritual world. It is really irrational to be always hunting for possible external sources whence new ideas might have been borrowed in germ, when the simple explanation is at our hand and supported by abundant evidence—that a spiritual genius reached the new idea by one flight of his own originality. Equally irrational is it to make mountainous difficulties out of the alleged appearance of a great doctrine centuries before its time. If our external witness assigns its discovery to a prophet,

and there is nothing precise to rebut the testimony, it is only scientific to consider without prejudice the claim of that prophet to have been centuries before his time, like Roger Bacon in the history of physical science. Is it not the habit of really great men to be on the hill-top to greet the rising sun?

One conspicuous reason for the success of Israel's training may be found in the absence, till the time was ripe, of any one prophet standing out immeasurably above his fellows. In such cases there is always danger that the people will fail to reach a standard which has been too suddenly lifted beyond their capacity. The degeneration that sets in is then complicated by the tendency to substitute an imaginary figure of the prophet for the reality, and claim his sanction for some of the ideas he most strongly repudiated.[1] Christianity itself was saved from this peril by the immediate appearance of a prophet, himself greater than any of Israel's succession, who was able to establish the interpretation of the Founder's Person and work on a firm basis for future times. The day of degeneration came, but the succession of prophets never failed; and in the Jesus of the Gospels and the exposition of His significance by Paul they had an ideal which only needed to be reinforced by teaching and example to seize the imagination of a new age.

In attributing to the prophets the whole credit as God's instruments for the spiritual education of Israel, I am not forgetting others who were entirely engaged in the service of the national religion. From early times there were priests, who outwardly took the most important part in the maintenance

[1] Many examples of this will be found in Zoroastrianism.

of the religion. But they never contributed anything to their country's spiritual treasure; and it is very significant that in our Lord's day the leaders of the priests were identified with the school which denied all the greatest discoveries of later Judaism, in the name of a dull materialist conservatism. The priest is rarely, if ever, a power for the maintenance or advance of religion, unless of course (as happily often happens) he is a prophet as well. If we compare the prophet to the inventor of the locomotive, we can at best compare the priest to the engine-driver. And all too often, by his characteristic tendency to magnify his office, he unfits himself for useful service in that humbler capacity, as if an engine-driver should take upon himself to adjudge the merits of improved machinery, and refuse to drive an engine of any later type than the 'Rocket.' It is very significant that the New Testament made no provision for the continuance of the priesthood as a separate order.

Much more important than the priests was the order of Scribes, the teachers who came into existence at the Return, and practically created what we know as Judaism. We are in some danger of condemning the class as a whole because of the hypocrisy which Jesus denounces so sternly in its leading members of His own day. When Milton in *Lycidas* 'predicts the ruin of our corrupted clergy,' we do not understand him to mean that there were none but time-servers and place-hunters in the ministry. Jesus Himself told a Scribe that He was 'not far from the Kingdom of God,' and He speaks of Scribes who have been 'made disciples to the Kingdom of Heaven.' We have evidence

from the Talmud that Ezra the Scribe was not without worthy successors. Their habitual leaning on authority marked the fact that they were not prophets, and did not pretend to be. And yet it was during the age of the Scribes that no less an innovation than the doctrine of immortality came in. The Christian Church from the first set its scribes or teachers only after the prophets, and it retains both in its service still.

These, then, were the instruments through whom Israel was so wonderfully trained. The stages in the training have been vividly brought out by Comparative Religion. The Old Testament faithfully preserves for us a host of features which we can recognize as common elements in all early stages of religion. It is a commonplace of our modern exegesis, illuminated as it is by the new science, that the Old Testament is the record of a progressive revelation. Our own sense ought to have taught us as much. We should hold emphatic opinions about a system of mathematical education which presented the differential calculus before the multiplication table; and it was a strange perversion which made the divine Teacher deal thus with the human nature that He made. And all the time our Lord's own words were before us. We knew how He attributed to Moses a temporary legislation which made concessions to the people's unreadiness for something higher, their 'hardness of heart,' as He called it. And still more emphatically we hear Him with royal authority set aside the Mosaic, and pre-Mosaic, *lex talionis* for a loftier law of His own promulgation, and declaring the very Decalogue in need of supplement for those who

would keep God's Law. With such declarations in view, we cannot object to a reading of the history of Israel which traces the Chosen People from the lowest stage, where they differed little enough from the heathen Semites from whom they sprang. What forces isolated them from pollution, stimulated the rise into monotheism, and taught them the ethical holiness of God, we must not ask now; the answer to all such questions is the object of all works on the religion of Israel.[1] I will only draw one or two conclusions on points of importance. It is suggestive that we find the educative process depend for its most valuable elements upon the very things that are counted vile in secular history. Mr. Norman Angell has been teaching the Great Powers the lesson, unpalatable enough to their pride, that prosperity and security and even financial credit stand highest among the little peoples of Europe, safe from the temptation to waste their treasure on 'patriotic' budgets, and spared the braggadocio of the mailed fist. Of course nations like England and our cousins across the Rhine may maintain some degree of advance in things that really matter, in spite of wicked waste upon luxuries that bear the devil's mark; but experience is showing that the true glory of a people is destroyed by militarism in all its forms. Israel's history is classical for the believer in peace. It opened in war, of course: war is natural to the barbarian who has only put one foot on the ladder of

[1] An exceedingly adequate outline of the subject may be seen in Professor A. S. Peake's little sixpenny manual (in *Century Bible Handbooks*). See also Mr. W. J. Moulton's *Fernley Lecture*, already mentioned.

progress. But as early as the reign of David prophetic vision began to teach that a king who had 'shed much blood' was thereby disqualified for building a temple to Jehovah, once Himself conceived to be 'a man of war.' The policy of the prophets was many a time directed towards breaking down the very forces that made their country great, as the world counts greatness. Elijah and his successor destroyed the House of Omri, an able and successful dynasty. Jeremiah's long martyrdom was the 'patriots'' vengeance on a magnificent pusillanimity. The attitude of the purely secular historian towards all this is typically seen in the following extract from a recent review of Professor R. A. S. Macalister's *Excavation of Gezer*:[1]

> One fact that stands out clearly from Professor Macalister's narrative is the extreme disservice which the revolt of the Maccabees rendered to their fellow-countrymen. At that time the Palestinians, both Jews and Samaritans, were being slowly but effectually welded into an important part of the great Syrian Empire, which might have formed an effective barrier for Asia against Roman aggression from the West and the incursion of real barbarians from the East. A longing for a nationality for which they were ill fitted—for in Palestine from the earliest times every man's hand was against his neighbour's—led the Jews to throw off the light and easy yoke of the Greek kings, only to fall into the iron clutch of Rome, and their rebellion, with far more reason, against this, led directly to their eradication from their native soil. The curse which one Pampras, a dispossessed Syrian, as Professor Macalister thinks, condemned to forced labour on the palace of Simon Maccabaeus, scratched on its wall: 'May fire follow up Simon's palace!' seems to have

[1] *Athenaeum*, July 6, 1912.

been prophetic of the ruin which the rising was to bring upon his native country.

Incidentally the 'light and easy yoke' involved the organized effort to suppress Israel's religion! There were many far-sighted but secularist patriots in the Maccabee days who had the same opinion of these conscience-ruled men. If they had had their way, the independence of Syria might or might not have been secured: whether that would have been better for civilization than the extension of the power of Rome we need not inquire. But we should miss from history one of the very few wars that really ennoble it; and for a dubious political advantage Judaism would have lost an inspiration that has enriched the world. After all, the Book of Daniel—even the First Book of Maccabees—were worth the price paid for their writing! The moral of it is that the laws of the spiritual world are very often the inversion of those prevailing in the outward world; and that the former, however invisible to acute observers who only look on the outside of things, are nevertheless far more abiding and influential in the end.

Next I would call attention to a very serious stumbling-block which appears in the history of religion everywhere, and is not absent from that we have been examining. The opponents of religion in all ages have been ready to point out that its records are written in blood and tears. Lucretius closes the poignant lines in which he describes the sacrifice of Iphigenia by her father, with the biting comment,

Tantum relligio potuit suadere malorum!

'Such monstrous wrongs could be prompted by religion!' is indeed a motto that seems to be writ large over the annals of man's groping after God. Nor can we be surprised if honest critics in the market-place or the study find themselves overwhelmed with indignation as they read the cold-blooded cruelties that make up so large a part of primitive cultus, or the history of religious persecution. Principal George Adam Smith, in his classical commentary on *Isaiah*, has a very striking chapter on the three classes of men who suffer violence at their fellows' hands—the criminal, the enemy, and the martyr; and he shows how the last suffers worst of all. *Corruptio optimi pessima*; and as religion is the deepest of all human emotions, so is it capable of stirring elemental hatreds more fearfully than any other power. Perhaps that is all that need be said in defence of religion against the charge that she inspired the nameless horrors for which the 'Holy' Inquisition is likely to remain supremely typical to all time. But something should be said about the other class of cruelties perpetrated in the ordinary course of savage cultus without any hatred, but in the blind belief that suffering and death of human victims may bring blessing to the race. Let me revert to the story of Iphigenia, and set by it, as Tennyson does in the *Dream of Fair Women*, another story, strangely like it, but charged with a moral that perhaps even the passionate indignation of Lucretius would not have missed. What a pitiful tragedy is that of the 'warrior Gileadite,' sacrificing his only child, and with her all his hopes of living again in his offspring and in hers, because he had opened his mouth to

Jehovah and could not go back![1] But however strongly we may feel the pity of it, we surely must see that there is ethical value here for which the price paid was not too high. The father fulfilling his vow with his very heart's blood, and winning his victory for the deliverance of unkindly countrymen by powerful trust in the national God to whom he has promised a tremendous gift—is he not worthy, rude barbarian though he be, to stand among the heroes of the eleventh chapter of *Hebrews*, who found God intensely real, and made the fruits of that reality a heritage for mankind? But if Jephthah is heroic, what shall we say of his daughter?

> When the third moon was rolled into the sky,
> Strength came to me that equalled my desire—
> How glorious a thing it was to die
> For God and for my sire!

In contrast to the purely passive Iphigenia, the Israelite girl becomes a partner in the vow—she has her share in her father's triumph and her country's deliverance! Has she not given an inspiration to mankind, fruitful in golden deeds?

[1] Professor Eduard Meyer (in his little monograph on *The Aramaic Papyri from Elephantine*, p. 47) incidentally alludes to the story as a solar myth. Few scholars indeed write with greater authority on matters of ancient history, but I confess the conclusion hard to follow. The story as it stands has every mark of verisimilitude, and fits exactly what may be presumed for the religion of Israel in that age and the most barbarous conditions of the age. Mr. A. B. Cook, who agrees with me, recalls a closer classical parallel to the Jephthah story. Idomeneus, king of Crete, vowed in a tempest that he would sacrifice whatever met him first on his return home. He either fulfilled or endeavoured to fulfil the vow, and was expelled by his subjects in consequence.

And when Christian faith comes in and proclaims that Death has no power to cast such lives 'as rubbish to the void,' we can try to imagine what use God can make of a soul so noble in the eternal world she never knew of till her father's act opened the door.

My general answer, then, to the charge that religion has cost mankind unspeakable anguish is that the anguish has proved to be the travail-pains of a higher life. Persecution has produced the noble army of martyrs, the very flower of humanity, and the bringers of the highest gifts that men have ever received. And if primitive religion has always been costly in suffering, it is right to remember that lessons have been taught by it which, on the principles even of those who would altogether cut away morality from religion, were worth learning. There is an unconsciousness about most of these cruel rites of primitive man which, when combined with the obvious sincerity of those who practised them, make us question whether the rites were really brutalizing. It is significant, too, that the victims of some of the most horrible cruelties are volunteers who accept their doom as a privilege. Within strict limits we may even apply the same principle to the bestial immorality which so often accompanies the rites of savage religion. So long as its *naïveté* survives, and men and women practise it with a strong sense of its close connexion with the fertility of Nature, which by sympathetic magic it is believed to assist, we can well believe it would be nothing like so debasing as it would appear to us. But naturally the danger here comes in when its religious motive has faded with the growth of intelligence, but it is still quoted

as an excuse for conduct now known to be degrading. When this time came, as it did for not a few religions, especially in the ancient Nearer East, Religion herself became a Circe who touched men with her wand and turned them into swine.

VIII

In closing this chapter, I want to bring out by one concrete example the important point that, in estimating contributions to the world's treasure of Truth, it is vital to consider not only the nature of the truth acquired, but also the process by which it has been acquired. It is one of the fundamentals in connexion with the natural history of religion that the search for Truth is even more vital to us than the finding of it. Truth delivered ready-made at our door has no blessing in it; for this is a prize which only he who seeks can verily find. And when an individual through weary months or years, a people through generations of disappointment and seeming failure, has toiled on without faltering, resolved only to be loyal at all costs to the truth already known, and never under any stress of trial to pretend to believe, or to believe without absolute conviction, then we are assured the seeker will realize sooner or later that an angel presence, even the very object of his quest, has been guiding him all through. And lo! as he looks back upon his path, the wilderness of his wandering has been glad and blossomed as the rose. This profound and precious experience of mankind will help us to understand how the world not only got the purest

truths from Israel, but got them enriched by the manner in which they had been found.

My example shall be the hope of immortality, no indispensable part of true religion, as the sequel will show, but an enrichment of it so priceless that it is hard indeed for us to conceive the one without the other. It is accordingly almost bewildering to us when we find that until the Old Testament canon was all but complete, the very idea of a future life in any shape was unknown.[1] Pharisees in our Lord's time exercised their utmost ingenuity to find it in the Books of Moses, but Sadducee exegesis held the field with ease. Yet, many centuries earlier, Vedic poets had hailed the dawn as the 'banner of immortality;' and Zarathushtra, the Prophet of Iran, had taught that the man of 'good deeds, words, and thought' should dwell in everlasting peace with the 'Wise Lord' in the 'House of Song.' Saints of Israel could still cry, 'In the grave there is no remembrance of Thee,' when Socrates drank the hemlock, serenely welcoming a blest communion, a fellowship divine beyond death, and with his last breath ordering a sacrifice to the Healer who had stilled for ever the 'fitful fever' of life on earth. How was it that Israel, on the mountain to catch the first dawn of every other truth, lay so long in the valley of the shadow when God was unfolding the sunshine of His 'living hope' for other men?

Now in the achievement of the mighty guess men have travelled very different ways. Nature-religions, like that of the Rigveda, impress their

[1] Some may think this statement too strong, but I cannot see any real opening for a recognition of the idea until a late period.

votaries with the high poetry that is new every morning for those who can read it. For them the daily miracle of the dawn is evidence of the triumph of life.

> So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
> *So* Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high.

Simpler and less poetic people meditate on visions of their dead that have appeared to them in sleep, and they infer the continued life of lost friends who have thus come back to them. Others again, like the great Zarathushtra, brood over the wrongs and the inequalities of this world, and their conviction that eternal Justice is on the Throne makes them picture a theodicy beyond the gates of the grave. Israel trod none of these ways. The saints and heroes of faith knew no hereafter but that of the nation, no personal immortality but in the life of their children and children's children. So long as Jehovah blessed His people, the present was rich enough, and good men only asked God to keep His own from Sheol for as lengthy a term as His grace might give. But when the darkness of the Exile fell, and devout worshippers were severed from the beautiful House of God's presence,—when even the Return only opened a new era of servitude, the promises of God rose into a higher sphere. Personal communion with Him became the one supreme good. His lovingkindness became better to them than life; in His right hand, and nowhere else, were pleasures for evermore. At first this new revelation only

added fresh terror to that which banished God's faithful servant to Sheol, where none could give Him thanks. But the thought drove faith back on deeper realities in God Himself. 'Take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations.' 'The Eternal God is my refuge,' cried the believing soul; 'the arms are everlasting that embrace me. Surely if I may call such a Being *my* God, He cannot leave the child of His love to Sheol?' So came the great idea into the heart of Israel's saints. It had come to the brain of Gentile thinkers ages before. But this regenerating hope was not destined to win the world by intellectual conviction, and the conquest of the heart in this case was slower but surer than that of the reason. When at last it came, it swept on like a fire to kindle hearts that would never have caught the glow from any source which was not at white heat of conviction.

Now this account of the rise of the doctrine of immortality in Israel coincides exactly, we find, with a great saying of Jesus. Challenged to prove the doctrine of the resurrection—which He significantly identified with that of immortality—from the central Books of Scripture, He laid His unerring finger on the words that told of God's personal relation with the patriarchs. There lay the warrant of faith. It was no accident that Israel recognized first the personal relation to God, and then after long ages drew the inference. The former truth was far the more important. Immortality in itself need not be an ethical doctrine at all. Valhalla, with its jousts and banqueting, the Moslem Paradise with its houris—a mere warrior or a sensualist can

believe in such a future life and be none the better for his creed. Even the lofty Zoroastrian doctrine of a theodicy stops short of the *love* of God. But when a man has learnt the blessedness of communion with infinite Holiness, all life is transfigured, and he can go on his appointed path below with a light from heaven to guide, bringing the perfect world of his hope down to the homes and haunts of men. A hope so won, so kept, is mighty to lift humanity towards the new order where the Will of God reigns. No unpractical dream, no unreal vision, nerves the best energies of those who come by way of Hebrew saintship into the heritage bestowed by Christ. 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.'

CHAPTER III

Christianity and Other Religions

I

Looking out over the plain of Elis, where every four years the multitudes assembled for the great Olympian games, there stood for centuries a statue that was the wonder of the world. It was the masterpiece of the Athenian Pheidias, the master-sculptor of all history; and from all that we hear of it through Greek writers, trained in the instincts of the most artistic nation ever known, we may well believe that Art would thankfully offer for that one statue the whole content of almost any gallery on earth. It was the figure of Olympian Zeus, of which for more than a thousand years the memory has survived only on two coins and in the descriptions of Pausanias and Dio Chrysostom. From these we learn that Pheidias ventured on a new departure in religion as well as in art. Zeus the Thunderer had been depicted in different forms, in which grandeur and awe found full expression. But the conception of the supreme Hellenic deity was to find its final expression in a human figure, majestic indeed beyond compare, but beautiful with a benignity and grace which recalled the Greeks to the profound implications of the Homeric title, 'Father of gods and men.' Till nameless vandals

of the dark ages destroyed the grandest monument ever 'graven by art and device of man,' the Zeus of Pheidias proclaimed to age after age that those who 'sought God, if haply they might grope for Him and find Him' had been guided in their quest, and found something even in marble to which the Deity was in a very real if limited sense 'like' after all.

We have no information that Paul ever passed by Olympia. The Jew within him, nurtured on the Second Commandment, might have seen even there, as in the numberless marble deities of Athens, only so much 'idolatry'; though we should like to think that the Greek in him was strong enough to whisper hints to his Christian tolerance, and prompt a recognition that five centuries before he preached in Athens one sincere soul had learnt something wonderful of God. But the centuries passed, and it proved that the glorious face was not only the climax of a vision that had died away before a brighter light. The Zeus begins to reappear, though with a new name. It is the name of Christ! The traditional type of the Saviour's face, so familiar to us that even a child would seldom be at fault in finding Him in a pictorial group, has been proved to be very old; one enthusiast even made an effort to argue its possible authenticity. I am afraid we cannot allow the wish to believe so much latitude as this would require; and the illustrations in Mr. A. B. Cook's monumental work on *Zeus* will soon enable any reader to judge for himself how strong is the case for the alternative.[1] I pretend

[1] I owe the information used in these paragraphs to personal communications with my brilliant and learned friend. His book was not published when this was written.

to no knowledge whatever on art or archaeology, but I gladly accept from an acknowledged expert an affiliation of the *Christusbild* which has profound suggestiveness for the subject of this chapter.

But before I point the moral of this parable I am tempted to add a second from the other side of the old classical world. From Athens I turn to Rome, from the greatest of all artists to one of the half-dozen greatest poets of universal literature. Like Pheidias, Virgil was a deeply religious man, and we have, of course, far more copious evidence of the fact in the poems of one who 'uttered nothing base,' and persuaded even the Middle Ages that he was not far from the Kingdom of God. It may have been only on the ground of the 'Messianic Eclogue' that Virgil figured as half a Christian in the epic of his only peer from Italy; but modern study would endorse and go beyond Dante's estimate of one of the gentlest and purest spirits in literary history. In a striking lecture delivered before the Classical Association when it came to Manchester,[1] my colleague Professor Conway dealt with the apotheosis of Augustus as handled by Virgil. There is something peculiarly nauseous in the flattery of the court poets on these lines—one thinks especially of Horace's familiar verses depicting the Emperor while still on earth sitting at the table of the gods:

Quos inter Augustus recumbens
Purpureo bibit ore nectar.

But in Virgil we are in a very different atmosphere, and here as everywhere the poet is transparently

[1] See the *Proceedings* for October, 1906, pp. 35–37

sincere. Men are repelled, Professor Conway noted, because Virgil called Augustus a god. But he did *not* call him a god: he called him *deus*—are we going to allow nothing for the deepening of the idea by the associations of Christianity? Moreover, it is found, as we examine Virgil's treatment of the subject, that he only admits the *motif* of apotheosis when he dwells on the blessings Augustus had brought to his exhausted country, or gratefully acknowledges his bounty to himself:

> *O Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit,*
> *Namque erit ille mihi semper deus.*

Augustus, it must be admitted, stood in much need of idealizing. He had waded through slaughter to his throne, even if he behaved wisely and humanely when he reached it. His historical record accordingly is as chequered as the mythological record of Zeus. But both alike, in the hands of truly religious thinkers, can yield the great lesson that 'God is good.' We realize the weak points of the Olympian religion, which by its intense anthropomorphism made it hard for the gods to rise above the level of men, and often left them far below it. Still more we condemn the Roman Caesar-worship, which was, in fact, the one gigantic foe with which Christianity in the first three centuries waged a life-and-death struggle. But now that Zeus has long ago come to a real grave, and Europe is no more in peril of Caesarism—for Russia, though in Europe, is not of it—we can afford to recognize that even from these sources there were thoughts worthy of being 'baptized into Christ.'

This last phrase recurs in the successive chapters

of Professor Percy Gardner's most suggestive book on *The Growth of Christianity*. The capacity of the new religion to absorb all that was best in the systems that were 'waxing old and nigh unto vanishing away' is one of its most obvious minor qualifications for a queenly rank over all the religions of the world. In my last chapter I tried to show how far we may accept efforts to put the syncretism further back. In general, we saw, the mixture of ideas had been relatively small when the apostles took up the inheritance of Israel, transfigured by the touch of the Christ. But when once a sure foundation had been laid—if we may vary the metaphor—stones from widely distant quarries could be brought and fitted to their place in a superstructure which must shelter the whole world. Professor Gunkel is quite justified in his claim (pp. 30 f. above) that a syncretic origin is entirely in keeping with the universal destiny of Christianity, whether we accept or deny the particular instances for which he makes the claim. And I must press here the principle that underlies the present discussion, lest any reader should think I am spending an undue proportion of space on ancient history in a book primarily concerned with modern missions. I have to ask in this chapter what is the attitude of Christianity to other religions, and it is vital to my answer if it turns out that in its earliest history it drew material of value from religions which yielded it unconsciously all that was best in them, and then perished before its advance. It may well be that history will repeat itself, and Wise Men from the East once more bring gold and frankincense and myrrh to the Christ, new-born to be their King.

II

But before we take the final leap into the conditions of the twentieth century, we must stop for one more discussion upon past history. We have seen that alien ideas have been ' baptized into Christ ' and become a not unworthy part of our Christian inheritance. Have the candidates for this baptism always been worthy, and has the baptism always involved the regeneration without which such neophytes can never be truly at home in the Church ? We recall Professor E. B. Tylor's weighty words[1] :

> The thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even of human existence.

I have endeavoured to trace one or two of the most important of these clues, and have drawn an induction as to the harmony between central Christian doctrine and the basic elements of human nature. But is it only pure and necessary thoughts and principles that are attached to these clues ?

The fact is notorious that in its long history the Church has not been always careful as to the character of her members on trial, whether individuals or ideas. She has baptized new converts in droves, and asked only perfunctory questions. And in her eagerness to win men to membership she has practised accommodation on a very large scale indeed. Now one of the most urgent problems of our modern missionary policy is that of the limits of accommodation. How far may long-established

[1] *Primitive Culture*, i. 421.

customs or beliefs be let alone when suited with an adequate Christian interpretation? The study of history, in the new light of Comparative Religion, will be a good preparation for framing our reply.

An excellent example of safe and harmless accommodation may be seen in Pentateuchal legislation.[1] A field of corn is not to be reaped to the very last sheaf; a corner is to be left for the poor and helpless to glean. But this assigned purpose is later by millennia than the practice itself, which may be traced all over the world, in harvest customs that have but lately died out even in our own country. The mass of material in *The Golden Bough*[2] shows clearly enough that the custom originally concerned the Corn-spirit, who fled before the reapers and made his last stand in the uncut corner. The custom was far too deep-seated to be dislodged, and it was only the intention of it which was foreign to the higher religion. This indeed, we should suspect, was already almost forgotten in the days of the settlement in Palestine; the harvesters may well have observed it vaguely 'for luck,' as our own country folk used to do. The legislation then supplied the humanitarian motive, good in itself, and quite enough to cover the old practice completely; and everything went on as before. Modern and mediaeval Christianity alike are full of adaptations. Our time of observing Christmas is an excellent example. The Mithraists kept just after the winter solstice 'the birthday of the Unconquered Sun.' It was a stroke of genius when the Christians, who had no

[1] See Lev. xix. 9, 10.

[2] See Part V. (third edition), *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, esp. ch. v. of the first volume.

possible knowledge as to the real day of the birth of Jesus, laid claim to the great holiday and kept thereon the birthday of the ' Sun of Righteousness.' A later season in the Christian year may serve to illustrate a less clear case for accommodation. The period of abstinence in early spring, called ' Lent ' in heathen days, was connected with the ideas of sympathetic magic, and aimed at giving strength to the crops just springing up. There are still celebrations in out-of-the-way regions in which the old heathen Lent is more apparent than its Christian adaptation. The Church took Lent over, made it vaguely commemorate at once the temptation at the outset and the passion at the close of our Lord's ministry, and bade men keep a period of abstinence in repentance and holy meditation. Here clearly is an institution which is in no way obligatory. We who prefer to neglect it need not however repudiate it because of its heathen origin. It is none the worse for that, if observed for instance as it is by multitudes of pious Anglicans. The only question that needs to be asked is whether the individual finds it profitable. If he does, that is reason enough for keeping it. If he does not, he is free to spread his holy seasons over other parts of the year.

But there are notable cases of accommodation, of which the Church of Rome has a large number, in which we cannot doubt that the results have been wholly bad. Polytheism was banished in name rather than in fact from the popular creed when the attributes of the old gods were transferred to Christian saints. The authoritative theologians of the Church might guard their formulae from peril,

though when prayer to these saints was permitted it is hard to see in what real sense monotheism was retained. Among the masses of the people there has been little effort to guard the principle. Mr. J. C. Lawson's interesting work on religious beliefs in modern Greece[1] shows that the 'Orthodox' Church has been as unsuccessful as the 'Catholic' in preserving the very creed that God is One. Christ has been robbed of His most precious attributes to furnish forth material for a goddess who is the lineal descendant of those of the old paganism. There is one strain in the 'Blessed Virgin's' ancestry which illustrates strikingly the point made by Professor Tylor in the sentence recently quoted (p. 85). The Greeks had a well-known cult of Demeter and Persephone, the Corn-goddess and her daughter, whose stealing away by 'gloomy Dis' in the plains of Enna is told by Milton in familiar lines.[2] They generally, however, substituted the simple word 'Maid' (*Korê*) for Persephone's name, and they would probably have substituted 'Mother' for Demeter's, had not popular etymology convinced them that the word was there already. Now the cult of the Mother and Child, the spirit of the ripe harvest and that of next year's sowing, was in existence ages before Greek religion; and it is in existence still, in most parts of the world.[3] The accommodation which kept the old figure, and by identifying it with the infant Saviour in His mother's

[1] *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (Camb. Univ. Press).

[2] *Paradise Lost*, iv. 268 ff.

[3] In modern Greece 'Saint Demetra' duly keeps up the hoary succession (Lawson, op. cit., p. 80).

arms brought it to be the emblem of the heavenly blessing on the divinest thing in human life, is beautiful and harmless enough. Nor should I be disposed to descend to the level of an intolerance unworthy of Protestantism, and declare that other features of Mariolatry are and have been irredeemably bad. In the dark ages the conception of a Man who combined the highest virtues of man and woman, strength and tenderness indissolubly blended, was naturally beyond the range of popular understanding. For their 'hardness of heart' Providence allowed that a grace peculiarly needed in evil and cruel times should come to them by an inherited religious idea which represented the highest men were then capable of taking in. It was better they should learn that way than not at all; and the apotheosis of Christ's mother at any rate brought them one step nearer to the Lord Himself. But however glad we may be to recognize all we can of good in the effects of this apotheosis, we cannot overlook the result in the arrest of the upward progress of religion. 'Catholic' countries are like children that cannot grow up. There are the child's virtues, including a devoutness which Protestants might envy, and a faith which can believe everything. But the heart of the child with the intelligence of the man is needed to accomplish religion's perfect work; and we cannot wonder that arrested development has produced an almost universal revolt of the brain in countries where Protestantism has had no chance. The whole process has carried with it a lowering of the sense of truth. Multitudes of the saints are mythical to the last detail of their story. The history of the word 'legend' is eloquent

here. The edifying life of a saint, ' appointed to be read ' from the pulpit in the monastery dining-hall, had a general character which stamped itself indelibly on the word appropriated for this true descendant of the classical ' myth.' The net result of the experience of Christendom does not encourage anything beyond a most cautious use of accommodation.

III

We turn to the question of modern non-Christian religions, their strong and weak points, and their relation to the missionary message. In this part of my subject, I need not say, the ground has been occupied already, and in the most authoritative way. The Report of Commission IV. of the Edinburgh Conference, embodying the experience of a host of missionaries as studied by men exceptionally qualified for their task, makes it sheer presumption for any one man to trespass on the theme, especially without access to that unique collection of first-hand evidence upon which Professor Cairns and his colleagues based their masterly survey.[1] I might have tried to add a section on the Parsi religion, concerning which no discussion was admitted at Edinburgh, the time being preoccupied with religions hardly any of which could number less than a hundred adherents for every one Parsi. The fact, however, remains that Parsism is by far the purest

[1] I cannot resist temptation to express my very strong wish that the Continuation Committee could devise means for publishing this evidence, or at least a very large selection from it. It is obvious from the Report that it would make a volume of immense value.

of non-Christian religions, and the Parsis are exceptionally worth winning. But anything I could say upon this tempting subject would be only a very brief summary of results arrived at in a volume on this sole topic, considerably larger than the present lecture. In my reflections on this central theme I shall take the Edinburgh classic for granted, keeping at the back of my mind, in addition, such work as that of Professor J. G. Frazer on primitive religions, together with some investigations in the special field just named.

The study of this Report powerfully impresses me with the tolerance, the modernity, and the open-mindedness of the missionaries whose experience is concentrated here. We, in our armchairs at home, need not indite any lectures to our brethren on the supreme importance of sympathy and knowledge of the religions of the people they evangelize. They can preach better sermons than we on the pregnant saying of the Master, ' I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.' In past days there was not a little of sheer iconoclasm in the spirit with which men went forth to drag men out of their systems of unredeemed darkness and error. It was not worth while to toil towards an understanding of these heathen systems : the missionary's duty was to destroy them, root and branch, as works of the devil. All this has passed away. In every part of the field the most typical missionaries are seen to be bending their whole force of brain and heart to the great task of acquiring a sympathetic understanding of their people's thoughts. They are busy with the heaps on their threshing floor, not to estimate with scorn the mass of chaff good for nothing but the fire, but to pick

out scattered grains of seed-corn that may grow in their Master's field. Even those who labour among the lowest Animists are no exception to the rule. The majority are reported as holding that God has not left Himself without witness in these peoples, and that the missionary must look for the element of good, extend it and build upon it. A striking example is quoted (p. 22) from a missionary of our own in West Africa, the Rev. W. T. Balmer :

> The most powerful and effective sermon I ever heard preached to a dark degraded company of pagans in the Interior was based upon their idea of sacrifice in fetish worship.

I must, in general, resist temptation to quote from a book which every serious student of Missions knows so well. But the complementary extract from the opposite extreme of the field will drive home the lesson of the whole. An American missionary in Japan, Dr. S. L. Gulick, writes thus (p. 95) :

> The Christian preacher should constantly take the ground that every good teaching in the native faith is a gift of God, the Father of all men, and is a preparation for the coming of His fuller revelation in Jesus Christ. We should show our real and deep respect for the 'heathen' religions; we should take off our hats at their shrines, as we expect them to do in our churches. We should ever insist that Christianity does not come to destroy anything that is good or true in the native faiths, but rather to stimulate, to strengthen, and fulfil it—to give it life and real energy. The trouble with the native religions is not that they possess no truth, but that the truth they have is so mixed up with folly and superstition that it is lost; it has no power—no life-giving energy.

This sympathetic attitude, which, after all, is only the attitude of Paul himself at Lystra and at Athens—fields nearly as different as Sierra Leone and Japan—is clearly that of the missionary body as a whole; we may fairly estimate the general temper from that of the representative men and women who speak through this Report. It does not mean that missionaries are blind to the darker side. I have quoted one of the workers whom the W. M. M. S. is proud to own; I should like to quote another by whom we are equally glad to have been represented at Edinburgh. An impressive letter from the Rev. C. H. Monahan is quoted at length in the Commission's postscript (p. 277), in which fear is expressed lest the ugly aspects of Hinduism should be forgotten in the endeavour to bring out its better features. Mr. Monahan shows himself entirely with the Commission in their recognition of what is good, and they wholly endorse his warning against a possible misinterpretation of Christian tolerance. The warning is strikingly echoed in some comments I have lately received from the Rev. William Goudie, whose right to speak about Indian religion is pre-eminent. He is very much afraid lest the new attitude should be supposed to involve too high an estimate of the elements of truth to be found in non-Christian systems, which we may often read into them by mistaken explanation of acts only outwardly capable of the higher meaning. But Mr. Goudie comes to the same conclusion as the others:

> Christianity conquers through its difference from, and not through its approximations to, all other forms of faith. Its first grip on the mind and heart

of a new convert is almost invariably through some point of contrast, and its first impact on his own faith is nearly always destructive. The first effect of Christianity on the Hindu systems must be to disintegrate. The constructive and inclusive process will come later; the experienced Christian will look back and see that though the sun has risen in him but lately the stars of God have shone all through the long night; he will be ready to cry 'Lo God was with me all the time, and I knew it not'; it is only in the light of the Christian faith that the fragments of truth in other systems can be discovered, valued, and placed in the final system.

If I may venture my own echo of this new voice with which the ambassadors of Christ are speaking to-day, I might repeat some words addressed to a meeting of Parsis in London—I am loth that the purest and best of the non-Christian faiths should be left out of a survey of God's witness to Himself among the Gentiles:

As I sum up in these few words Zarathushtra's ideals, I reflect with satisfaction that the prayer, 'Let the good kingdom come,' will go equally well into your sacred language and into mine—into the words of the Gâthâs[1] and those of the Lord's Prayer. You will, I am sure, understand and allow my wish this afternoon to plead for two great religions and not one only, nor will you expect me to bate what I, of course, consider the higher claims of my own faith. But I want to emphasize my feeling that a Christian student of Parsism must always carry at the back of his mind his Master's words, 'I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.' Were I to venture to preach to Parsis, I should urge them to be better Parsis—to learn more

[1]The Hymns of Zarathushtra (Zoroaster), the oldest and most valuable part of the Avesta. They are translated in my *Hibbert Lectures*.

and more of the essence of their great Prophet's teaching, and believe more fervently and put into action more continually the doctrine of God and man which he set forth nearly three thousand years ago. I cannot think of a single doctrine that has any claim to originate from Zarathushtra which I should press a Parsi congregation to abandon. I only want to add to the teaching what seems to me wholly consistent with its highest thoughts. I recall the smallness of your community, and your refusal to admit proselytes, much less to seek them; and I venture to ask whether you are doing your part for the *Frashokereti*, the 'regeneration' not of India only but of the world, to which your Prophet bade you look forward. History leads us to expect great things from a people so enlightened and public-spirited as yours. But am I not right in declaring that a merely material and external regeneration has no seeds of permanence in it, and that religion must come in to give it soul? If that be so, may we not remind one another this afternoon that Zarathushtra expected his work to be completed by other *Saoshyants*, 'Saviours,' under whom at last

> Hell itself shall pass away,
> And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day!

And we say that the *Saoshyant* has come, and you were the first to greet Him. Your own Wise Men recognized His *fravashi*[1] in the sky, and came to worship Him, first of all the Gentile world. Am I suggesting to you an apostasy—am I urging you to become worse Parsis or better, when I plead that you should recognize the Prophet of Nazareth now as you did then, and help Him to destroy the works of Ahriman in preparation for that final renovation of the Wise Lord's[2] world? We claim that no one

[1] The spiritual counterpart of a man, dwelling in heaven, and in some forms of Magian religion apparently associated with the stars. See my *Hibbert Lectures*, ch. viii.

[2] Ormazd (*Ahura Mazdah*) means 'Wise Lord,' the divine antagonist and ultimate conqueror of Ahriman (*Angra Mainyu*), the 'Enemy Spirit.'

> nation can ever fully interpret our Christ, or grasp fully the religion which will one day dominate the world. We look for the help of the Brahman and the Moslem, the Buddhist and the Confucian, to bring their several treasures to the feet of the coming Lord of men. And when the dream is realized, surely no gold will shine so richly, no frankincense smell so sweet, as that which shall be brought into His presence by those who follow the saintly Sage of Iran and the heroic Pilgrim Fathers who brought his sacred fire from Persia to Bombay.

Side by side with all this frank and cordial recognition of the good in other religions, we note in the missionaries' testimony an assurance as emphatic as ever that Christianity is *the* religion. There is no hint that men who really know the non-Christian systems at close quarters ever find their own faith supplemented or corrected by contrasts where Christianity has to take a second place. Many of the witnesses admit, in answering the question whether their experience has 'altered in form or substance' their 'impression as to what constitute the most important and vital elements in the Christian gospel,' that their minds have undergone a change. But it is always in one direction. First things have leapt to first place. Experience has driven them, as it drove the greatest of all missionaries, to throw the whole emphasis on the central truth. I return to this in the concluding chapter, but I must anticipate so much here. The study of Comparative Religion, whether in the laboratory with the student at home, or in the field with the foreign missionary, will do nothing to disturb the primacy of 'Jesus and the Resurrection' among all the truths that have come to

men. Each religion in turn is found to have glimpses of truth, some few enough, others more or less abundant; but none of them has anything of value which cannot be traced in the New Testament. Practical contact with other religions may sometimes indeed shake doctrines on which the Church has set her seal at one time or another; but when the Christian goes back to his authentic documents he finds they are not there. Not seldom, of course, we meet with claims on the part of the higher religions that their tenets are superior to the antagonistic doctrines of the preachers of the gospel. But the superiority is never one which would be admitted by any jury of impartial outsiders, or sustained by an argument that would appeal to the world at large.

The modern missionary, then, goes forth on an essentially constructive errand. He has his destructive work to do. His people are in bondage to the fear of malignant spirits: he has to break their chains. They associate with religion practices of cruelty and lust: he has to find a way to their conscience, that they may forswear such religion. But in doing this he never fails to use the 'expulsive power of a new affection.' The attractive power of Jesus does more to dissipate evil than the most effective denunciation. The life of the missionary and the purity and kindliness of his home are a form of argument more telling by far than any logic he has at command. In his sermons and private conversations with the people he is always searching for something they understand already, however dimly, and out of the little good to bring the best of all. This transformation of the missionary motive

is not an object lying before us, visible to the far-seeing, and slowly finding its way to the duller minds. It is an accomplished fact without which indeed the Edinburgh Conference could not have met at all. Of course, the missionaries whose communications form the material of the Report are outstanding men and women, the choicest brains in the service of all the Missionary Societies. But I think those of us who know the more ordinary missionary in considerable numbers will agree that their representatives here have not untruly painted the ideals and practice of those whom they lead. We need not speak of the present as a transition period, unless we are thinking of the home base of Missions. There, indeed, there is lagging. The old motive, founded largely on the thought of hell, has admittedly lost all its effectiveness; and with a majority, one fears, even of church members, there is nothing adequate to fill its place. It will come, with every other spiritual blessing, when at last the longed-for revival fills the home churches with new life. But on the mission-field our brethren know perfectly well what they have gone to do. They have rediscovered the motive of Paul, who went to discharge a mighty debt that he owed to all men. Christ had infinitely enriched his own life, and he must pass on to others the unsearchable riches that belonged to them as much as to him. They were not absolute paupers; some portion of their inheritance had come to them. But woe was to himself, Paul knew, if he kept back the heavenly treasure that was due to his brethren in every land.

Among the many thought-provoking notes on the

evidence, contained in the brief but profoundly important review that gathers up and enforces the summary, I may call attention first to those which point us to modern Missions as a commentary on the New Testament and the early history of Christianity. The first impact of the Faith upon communities of men is antecedently likely to be attended by very similar phenomena in all ages, since the unity in diversity of human nature is being worked upon by the same new force. The task of our missionaries confronted with Indian thought has many resemblances to that of Paul in the midst of Hellenism. The colossus of Caesar-worship which bestrode the path of early Christianity has risen again to dispute the advance of the Faith in Japan. The antithetic attitudes which missionaries have taken towards the religions of the peoples reproduce those of two early schools—that of Tertullian, who could see nothing but the devil's work in paganism, and that of the great Origen, who loved to recognize on every hand the signs of the preparation of the gospel. Our biblical commentaries might jettison some venerable lumber to find room for riches gathered from the experience of mission work to-day. Each several field of non-Christian religion can supply much-needed correctives of our popular Christian doctrine. The missionary takes with him the crude Western setting of New Testament truths, and is soon forced to reconsider his theology. He finds the doctrine of the Trinity a grievous stumbling-block to the Moslem. He tries to explain it, and realizes that the doctrine elaborately worked out by Greek theologians, so as to express monotheism in

its most absolute form, has been developed into practical tritheism in the religious language of a race unaccustomed to fine distinctions and minutely exact statement. No wonder if he demands as an imperative necessity a restatement of Trinitarian doctrine, which shall emphasize the Unity of God and define the meaning of 'Son' as applied to Christ, so that we may in coming back to the New Testament escape a reproach cast at us by the thoughtful Moslem.

We may set beside this a complementary reaction between Islam and Christianity, which becomes relevant at this point because it affects the doctrine of the Trinity. A recent remarkable article[1] by a Moslem convert of intellectual distinction dwells on 'the light shed by Islam on Christianity.' He shows how 'the life and history of Islam afford the strongest psychological argument and the mightiest historical proof of the inmost irrepressible yearning of the human heart after Christ.' For the very religion whose *raison d'être* was the protest against 'the deification of Christ or any man whatsoever' has been driven in self-preservation 'to yield to a strong current of anti-Islamic pro-Christian tendency to seek for a divine-human mediator.' Mohammed becomes the God-man—just as Gautama in present-day Buddhism. (The Unitarian interpretation of this fact is, of course, very obvious; but it fails to explain a tendency which by its radical establishment in human nature urges its claim to be the inevitable course of God's self-revelation.) The writer goes on to cite a most remarkable page

[1] *International Review of Missions*, January, 1913. I quote from pp. 115 f.

from a learned Indian Mohammedan, which openly claims the doctrine of the Trinity 'as something common between the two forms of religion.' This Moslem thinker accuses Christians of 'a blasphemous interpretation of the doctrine by regarding the personality of God as split up into three distinct personalities.' He admits that

> This splendid doctrine has not been well understood by the majority of Islamic and even Christian thinkers. The doctrine is but another way of stating the truth that the absolute unity must have in itself a principle of difference in order to evolve diversity out of itself. Almost all the attacks of Mohammedan theologians are directed against vulgar beliefs, while the truth of real Christianity has not sufficiently been recognized. . . . Sheikh Muhaiyu 'd Din Ibn i 'Arabī says that the error of Christianity does not lie in making Christ God, but that it lies in making God Christ.

Passing on from the tempting subject just described, we may apply the same inquiry to another great non-Christian religion. The Christian teacher goes to the Parsi,[1] and if prepared by knowledge of the Parsi's oldest scriptures can lead some way towards Christ by leading back to his own prophet Zarathushtra. He finds the problem of evil seriously faced, and solved on lines which only popular misunderstanding removes very far from those of the

[1] Which alas! he practically does not do at all: the excellent work done by the University Women's Settlement in Bombay among Parsi women is about the only systematic attempt to influence a community which if weighed and not counted would be high among our missionary ambitions. It is to me rather hard to understand fully why the Parsis are ignored in the Report, and no mention of them admitted at the Conference. For the expansion of the hints given above I may refer to my *Hibbert Lectures*, ch. ix.

New Testament. Christian theology has not a little to learn on this subject by careful comparison with the thoughts of a profound religious genius, living, perhaps, nearly a millennium before the coming of Christ. On the combination of monotheism with the idea of a plurality of hypostases within the Godhead, and on the postulates of ethical immortality, Zarathushtra's teaching is full of suggestiveness. But not even here, where Gentile thought is purest and highest, do we find anything in which the New Testament can be supplemented: we have helpful unconscious commentary, but nothing that tempts us to correct what we read in our own Scriptures. In our study of Church history we find in Parsism what is equally instructive. In both systems we see a doctrine of primitive monotheistic purity invaded by saint and angel worship, prayer replaced by spells, Scriptures recited in a dead language, priests usurping control of a worship which in its first beginnings was free. It throws valuable light on the tendencies which everywhere exist to drag religion down.

Hinduism is treated so fully and acutely in this Report, on a mass of evidence supplied by exceptionally numerous and able witnesses, that I shall not make any selections for fear of spoiling a chapter that should be carefully studied entire. What impresses me more, perhaps, than any contacts of thought is the lesson of the intense earnestness of the Indian quest for God. In 'The Miracle of Purun Das' (*Second Jungle Book*), Mr. Kipling paints with obvious truth an inspiring picture of renunciation in the search for purity, peace, and God. Many of us have heard Dr. Henry Haigh's

moving story of the faqir who had held his arm high above his head for years till the stiffened muscles refused to let it down. In words reminding us of Cranmer at the stake, he told the missionary that he had sinned with that hand, and this was his effort to win redemption. We need not equate the metaphysical Hindu idea of sin with the ethical idea central in Christian doctrine ; nor can we overlook the fact that the object before the Indian ascetic does not transcend the limits of his own soul. We can recognize the limitations and yet feel strongly the spiritual capacity, the power of will and self-discipline which can accomplish these prodigies of renunciation. Surely a country which can produce such power of sacrifice has much to teach the shallow conviction and easy self-forgiveness of the West, whatever we may say about the low religious value of Hinduism itself, or the fruits of it in social life. One point I would notice out of the evidence described in the Report, which does not figure in the concluding chapter. It is very curious to observe, in a phase of thought prominent among the fashions of our most modern modernisms, an approximation to the normal Hindu attitude towards Christianity as an historical religion. For the Hindu, we are told, history has no cogency. 'History belongs to the realm of the unreal and illusory.' 'The only reality to the Indian mind is spiritual life ; facts are but casual phenomena. A thought is of more value than a fact, an illustration as valid as an argument' (p. 167). Strange that the objective, materialist West should betray inclinations towards this characteristically Indian posture of thought!

We have 'new theologians' writing in the *Hibbert Journal* to urge that the truths of Christianity—or such as remain of them—are really independent of the historical existence of Jesus. To pass from clever trifling to a far higher intellectual and spiritual level, I may instance a conversation I once had with a great scholar who had criticized with ruthlessly negative results the documentary evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. He told me he had done it because of his conviction that we needed to be driven from depending on mere history to a dependence on experience as the ultimate criterion. We Methodists are not likely to undervalue the appeal to experience; but to make it the substitute for history instead of its guarantee is the exaggeration of a supremely important truth.[1] But the exaggeration, whether in Indian or in European thought, may help us to bring the Western mind round to consider what is after all the most compelling of the Evidences of Christianity.

The most important of all the non-Christian religions, Buddhism, is only treated incidentally in this Report. The evidence that reached the Commission was for some reason very scanty, as far as Southern Buddhism is concerned, and they preferred to leave the subject untouched rather than produce a judgement based on insufficient evidence. So we have it only as it appears in China, with an appendix summarizing four papers sent in from missionaries to Buddhists in Burma, Siam, and Ceylon. A treatment of the classical Buddhism parallel with

[1] On this subject I may refer to an excellent address by my colleague Professor Peake, at the united Methodist Assembly in 1909. See also the discussion of it in Mr. Jackson's *Fernley Lecture* (1912), pp. 159 ff.

that of Vedântism would have been of immense value, and if the Continuation Committee could arrange for a supplementary volume from the same gifted hand, based on adequate evidence gathered under less hurried conditions, it would be a great service. Meanwhile I will pursue my avowedly desultory treatment by way of reminder that Buddhism also has its *praeparatio evangelica*, and its lessons for us to use in practical study.

It is needless to labour the point that the best side of Buddhism contains elements of high religious value. The more we strip off accretions and get back to the Founder's figure, adorned the most when freed from an idealizing treatment that only spoils its subject, the higher do we place a Prophet who sorrowed in absolute unselfishness for the sorrows of men, and gave himself and all his powers to the working of their deliverance. His moral code, if obeyed according to his own example, would elevate any people. Alas! there is 'great virtue in an *if*'! For all experience shows that it is relatively easy to frame an exalted code of ethics, and one which can be followed by a small body of men under the powerful impulse of a new enthusiasm. The impossibility is that of prolonging the impulse, and communicating it to large communities. No unaided human will has ever accomplished that. And the Buddha left out God. It is tragic to think that the founders of both the non-Christian world-religions, the only serious rivals to our Faith to-day, owed the fatal defects of their systems to the degeneracy of the witness to God around them. Mohammed knew Christianity only

from an utterly corrupt superstition, which left the New Testament so much out of account that he was never prompted to read it. And for the Buddha the idea of God as he found it was devoid of moral value, and could make no appeal. He lived among the descendants of men who first chanted the Rigveda hymns to Varuṇa, cousins of those who reached a still higher ethical level in the Avestan hymn to Mithra—to say nothing of the incomparable Zarathushtra, with his pure monotheistic Deity. The religious environment of the Buddha was not unlike what that of Socrates would have been in the absence of poets and philosophers who preceded him in his quiet rejection of immoral ideas connected with the Divine. But however intelligible, the ignoring of God deprived Buddhism of moral dynamic. Later generations tried to fill the great gulf by a virtual apotheosis of the Buddha himself—a proceeding based on what we have seen to be a primal instinct of humanity, everywhere led towards the idea of God through the best it can see in man. It is interesting to note that the instinct was exaggerated in Christianity and Buddhism along parallel lines, the Buddha's human existence being declared illusory, just as that of Jesus was by the Docetists of old. Other forms of ancient Gnosticism find a parallel in the theosophy which has fastened on Buddhism in modern times, and produced a curious syncretism that endeavours to make an appeal to thinkers in the West. A more profitable sectarian development of Buddhism is that which in Japanese Amidaism, and in the Southern Buddhist doctrine of the Buddha Maitreya (Mittrya), leads men to the thought of a being who

is ' the incarnation of Love as Gautama was of Wisdom ' (p. 285). There is an interesting suggestion (p. 98) that the Amida doctrine may have originated in Gnostic Christianity.

IV

Very full of suggestion is the thought which Professor Cairns himself urges in his address to the Conference on presenting the Report. For him the moral of the whole study is that the Church must set herself to search for the ' reserves of spiritual force ' which remain unappropriated in her own revelation. All analogy of religious history enforces his appeal. It is obvious that life depends on progress ; and if Christianity has no new discoveries in prospect, atrophy must follow. Those who place their Golden Age in the idealized past, and are always sighing for the great days of Wesley, or the Reformation, or the Early Church, mean well, but do not realize what their prayer for an ' old-fashioned ' revival implies. The God from whom our next great season of spiritual springtide must descend will assuredly not be content to repeat Himself. He has no duplicates to give. His mercies are ' new every morning,' and ' He that sitteth on the Throne saith, Behold I am making all things new.' Every fresh outburst of spiritual life in history has been due to a discovery. Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther, George Fox, John Wesley, John Henry Newman, David Livingstone, William Booth—all these men of spiritual genius were truly discoverers, who added something to the wealth of Christianity as it

was in their time. Their discoveries were extraordinarily different, and of unequal value, but they were all truly new. Everything permanent in all of them was in the Gospel already, and it may well seem strange to us that no one saw these truths before. But the greatest facts in the spiritual world are not discovered like new planets or new chemicals, swimming into the ken of the fortunate explorer as something on which no human eye ever rested before. They are very often known ages before the day of their 'discovery.' They have been on the lips of men as sacred formulae for generations. Preachers have discoursed about them, theologians have argued over them, ordinary hearers have found them very beautiful. And then a Prophet has come, and discovered that the words *meant something!*

It may be worth while to pursue this line a little further, for it has extremely important consequences closely connected with the subject of our inquiry. One of many strange things that drastic criticism has found out about Jesus is that He was not original. The Lord's Prayer is only a cento from voluminous Jewish liturgies. Hillel and the Book of Tobit anticipated the Golden Rule. (Incidentally it may be observed that here, as in numerous Gentile enunciations of it, the form is *negative*, which our critics seem to think makes no difference!) And so forth. The theory in not a few cases requires us to assume that there was a public free library in Nazareth or Capernaum, containing a complete set of Sacred Books of the East, translated into Aramaic or Greek. In this way, no doubt, the young Carpenter contrived to appropriate

gems of wisdom from all the ages—including, by the way, many from sages not yet born. But let that pass. It would make extremely little difference to us if Jesus could be proved to have borrowed all His public sayings. He 'made them current coin'—extracted them (*ex hypothesi!*) from a wonderful commonplace-book in which were duly written up all that was worth preservation in an immense range of religious literature, and brought them down into the market-place for daily use among plain unlettered men. If any one is 'scientific' enough to insist on this view of the matter, I shall not quarrel with him. For even thus Jesus would remain the most stupendously original of all the world's teachers of religion.

Let us take one specific example, the short and simple sentence which in the Epistle of James is called the 'Imperial Law,' forming the whole code for the regulation of human relations in the Kingdom of God. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' is a precept as old as Leviticus. Nor did it lie there unrecognized among the old-world ceremonial ordinances in which it is embedded. The Jews in our Lord's time had recognized its primary importance, and put it next the First Commandment of the Law. For this they deserve no little credit, considering the incidental nature of its first appearance. Their only difficulty was in defining the 'neighbour' to whom so heavy a debt was due. For all this we feel that the warm-hearted clerical questioner in the vivid narrative of Mark xii. 28–34 found something perfectly new in the Master's answer. He came to get a matter of speculation settled; he received

a rule of life, which fastened itself in his conscience like an arrow, sped to the mark by the overwhelming personal force of the Prophet who read his very soul. As thus declared by Jesus, and exemplified in the lives of a multitude of His first disciples, who were imitating His spirit rather than merely obeying His word, the old Levitical prescription broke on the world with a novelty as absolute as if it had never been heard before. It has kept its primary place ever since. And yet we might almost say that our own age is uneasily searching for a new discovery in those well-worn words. A century ago, when our Missionary Society had lately begun its work among the negro slaves of the West Indies, the enthusiasts of Clapham discovered that the negro was their 'neighbour,' and that 'loving' him as much as they loved themselves involved them in heroic efforts to set him free. It seems very obvious to us, but it was not obvious to decent, humane, Christian people of the time. Mrs. Newcome, who took a deep interest in 'the sufferings of negroes,' is painted by Thackeray with a satire, good-natured indeed, but as keen as that which Dickens employed in the savage caricature of Mrs. Jellyby. Later on, good men discovered that the drunkard was their 'neighbour,' and that 'loving' him meant for themselves the readiness to give up alcoholic drink, and by legislation to invade the 'rights' of men who make money by the degradation of their fellows. This special case is not yet recognized so universally as that of the slave. But there are a multitude more to come, some of which may appeal to the man in the street still less. It may be necessary for us to deal drastically with

the liberty of the subject if we are to 'love' the poor man's daughter enough to protect her from a fate which we shudder to dream of as falling on one of our own.[1] And the Churches are agitated as to whether the existence of dismal slums and grinding poverty in the heart of our wealthy civilization—conditions which shrewd Hindu propagandists are exploiting as fruits of Christianity—is easily reconcilable with loving our neighbour as ourselves. We have begun so far at the wrong end, and are trying to settle as Churches whether the Liberal, the Conservative, or the Socialist nostrum is the one and only remedy—a task supremely unsuitable for Churches to undertake. But ere long, it may be, God will send us a prophet who will bring the Churches back to their proper duty by the discovery that the helpless poverty of those who have never had a chance is as gross an offence against the 'Imperial Law' as negro slavery itself. And then at last even politicians who are no Christians will realize a mandate that they dare not misunderstand or ignore. Nor will even this exhaust the discoveries that have yet to be made in the simple precept. Some one will discover that the German is our 'neighbour,' and that the habitual style of militarists and scaremongers of their persuasion cannot possibly be squared with a Law which Christians profess to regard as binding. A world where a higher Imperialism has put all national patriotisms back into the obscurity which shrouds them in the New

[1] This was written before the passage of the White Slave Traffic Act, in which the Christian conscience achieved a signal triumph. But I do not delete my words, as if the passing of this legislation exhausted our duty! For even Acts of Parliament, with or without flogging powers, will not turn human nature upside down.

Testament—where all varieties of homicide are remembered with abhorrence that hardly stops to differentiate—such a world will yet be, but it will emerge from a whole series of startlingly original 'discoveries' yet to be made within the compass of these few simple words. The Law of Christ is found to be the asymptote to which the curve of human progress is constantly approaching, only to meet it at Infinity.

This last paragraph may seem provocative to some who have not yet realized the full implications of the teaching of Jesus in this direction. I am sorry, but I cannot help it. I might have been content to illustrate my thesis with truisms, but they would fail to drive it home. The abolition of slavery was once as much of a 'fad' as the abolition of war is still. I am content to wear the name of faddist as an honour, if my critic is honest enough either to admit that the Law of Christ can bear no other meaning, or to try to reconcile war with its unambiguous and imperious demand. The effort will be good for him, and may even teach him things new and strange.

I have not really been deviating from Professor Cairns's pregnant hint, to which I now return for a few closing lines of application. The Law which Jesus put forth as the first and all-embracing corollary of love towards God is for that reason alone the best example I could choose of a country still only partially explored by Christian thought. It is an easier example also than one chosen from less practical fields could be. And it illustrates well what we might call—reverting to the mathematical figure—the equation to that curve of

human progress: man's will continually drawing away from the Ideal, yet more and more faintly, so that every new point is a little nearer to that with which it will ultimately coincide. I shall not risk any speculation as to the discoveries of unappropriated spiritual forces which Dr. Cairns expects as the outcome of the present world crisis. We should all of us be praying for vision whereby to realize at once the magnitude of the crisis, the need of far greater resources than we now possess to meet it, and the certainty that the resources are there for our need. There is an intolerable strain upon the Church's present possession, which fails to suffice for her work at home. The deliverance will come through well-recognized principles of the Kingdom of God, if, when conscious of insufficiency for the narrower work, she boldly flings herself into a far vaster enterprise. The grace such a venture brings will mightily revive her energies for the task at home.

V

I have treated, with a desultoriness only possible where a complete and adequate treatment can be referred to at each point, the lessons we may learn from the positive side of the leading religions of the world. There are other aspects which will occupy us in the next chapter. Meanwhile I must examine one or two features of the darker side which will help us in what we may call the pathology of religion. Professor F. B. Jevons[1] remarks that religions have

[1] 'Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion' (*Hartford-Lamson Lectures*, 1908), p. 58.

had sometimes to abandon religious ideas, and make 'a *tabula rasa* on which might be written a fairer message of hope than had ever been given before.' Christianity alone has never run into a *cul-de-sac*. But even Christianity has not been exempt from the universal law which ordains that the higher the organism the stronger is the tendency to revert to type. In it and in all the higher religions the law is seen at work which Virgil expresses in well-known lines[1]: all things are bound by fate to go back and be swept away, like a rower pulling up stream who relaxes for a moment the tension of his arms. Since religion can never follow the line of least resistance, but always depends on unresting effort of the soul, it is obvious that in the study of its progress we must allow very largely for the degeneration that comes from mere slackness. It is incomparably easier to say prayers than to pray, to perform rites than to love mercy and walk humbly with God. And so there is a force ever at work dragging men back to these 'beggarly alphabets'[2] of religion, necessary enough when they were just learning to read God's lesson, but childish in later days. Some suggestions have been made already (p. 56) as to the possible history of a degeneration which among some animistic tribes produces the phantom of a deity 'who created the world and afterwards abandoned it.'[3] According to the view there taken, this primitive Epicureanism

[1] *Georgics*, i. 199–202.

[2] Gal. iv. 9. I do not mean to be dogmatic about this rendering of στοιχεῖα. Quite conceivably it means 'phantoms.' See 'Lexical Notes from the Papyri,' *Expositor* VIII., i. 567 (June, 1911), or Deissmann, art. 'Elements,' in *Enc. Biblica*, 1261.

[3] See the Report, p. 25.

was the outcome of the apparent failure of prayer and worship in the winning of material blessings. A process closely resembling the Darwinian 'reversion to type' may be seen in the relapse into polytheism occurring at various periods in the history of Israel, in Zoroastrianism, and in Christianity. Such also is the return of magic, if Dr. Frazer is right in making this normally a prior stage to religion. There is a curious conservatism which loves to retain forms that once had a meaning, but by retention when no longer understood acquire a purely magical value. The Gâthâs or Hymns of Zarathushtra were chanted when their language was obsolete, and the people knew nothing of their meaning. Just so the Old Greek Bible is read in the churches of Athens, and the Vulgate in Roman Catholic worship everywhere, to congregations that cannot follow a sentence of them. Dead languages, archaic vestments, obsolete rites, are kept in religious use from the notion that divine powers will be offended by any change in the cult to which they are accustomed. The belief grows that the exact performance of ritual and the validity of the qualification of priests are jealously watched by those powers. The more these minutiae are exalted, the less chance has true religion with the mass of the people who are led to believe that they matter. Naturally these forces of degeneration act most powerfully upon religions which have emerged from the lower levels: 'He that is down need fear no fall.' We have no evidence that would justify us in the assumption that the downward tendency is the sole or chief explanation of the rudimentary condition of savage

religions. Some primitive peoples may once have been in a rather higher condition as to civilization and religion alike; but in neither case is there any reason to suppose that they are descendants of people once on a high plane. In the case, however, of the most advanced religions it is all too possible that the sacred fire may be absolutely quenched, and a people once professing a lofty faith descend into the abysses of superstition and materialism, which lie very close together.

VI

One more question may be attacked before we bring to a close the general survey of this chapter. It has reminded us that good and evil are inextricably blended in the long history of religion.[1] And there are voices among the leaders of some schools of thought to-day proclaiming aloud that the evidence convicts religion of being a disease of the human mind destined to disappear with the full development of culture. The testimony of prejudiced witnesses, as we are assumed to be, is of course rejected here. But we can call witnesses who are above suspicion. In a striking course of lectures published under the title of *Psyche's Task*, Professor J. G. Frazer shows how the institutions of government, of private property, of marriage, and of respect for human life grew up under the sanctions of primitive religious ideas. These ideas are all of them to our eyes as absurd as they are obsolete. They served a necessary purpose, and then gradually

[1] Compare what was said on this subject in chapter ii. §7.

vanished away. But it is just these 'absurdities' which did the work humanity needed; and religion is thus proved to have been indispensable even at the stage where its defence seems hardest. Perhaps however the epithet 'absurd' is only on a footing with those we may imagine passing through the brain of an old bachelor inspecting a nursery. He cannot be expected to understand the difference between the childlike and the childish. Yet he may learn some day that those absurd games, in which he would think it preposterous for him to join, were being used by discerning teachers to educate the children on natural and healthy principles in subjects of vital importance to their after-life. The epithet of contempt does not begin to become appropriate till we see those children's games continued when the children are grown up. Then they become evidence of mental weakness. Even so, religion may fail to grow, and become superstition. But when men are still in the child stage of progress we shall do well to engage, as Professor Frazer puts it, 'in Psyche's task of sorting out the seeds of good from the seeds of evil.'

Not only does religion, then, shelter the first beginnings of culture, and in its healthy growth continue to inspire higher developments of social life. We soon find that there are many close analogies in the progress of religion and of civilization, which encourage our confidence that the former is as true and necessary an element in human progress as the latter is always felt to be. Advances in civilization everywhere begin in limited areas, among peoples with special gifts, who can produce and make the best use of men with inventive genius.

Then other communities are affected, and the new institutions or inventions are spread from the original centre over a widening expanse. Man advances by a kind of cross-fertilizing: the individual, or the isolated community, can only develop to full advantage by the help of his neighbours, from whom he receives and gives to them in turn. He does not always learn from his superiors, or even his equals; sometimes those who are below him in one respect will be above him in another, and progress will result from the passing on of the best achievements of single contributors to the common store. So true it is that no man liveth unto himself. There is, of course, an obverse to this picture of progress. The worst as well as the best gifts are passed on; and some of these, like the microbes of a fearfully infectious disease, will start from one centre and spread their contagion round the world. But on the whole the resultant is an advance; and it is brought more surely and swiftly forward by the new conditions which make the whole world speedily acquainted with every step forward, wherever it has been taken.

On strikingly similar lines is the normal development of religion. Progress comes from invention: we have already seen that those whom we call prophets are the great inventors in the sphere of spiritual things. These new developments of religion have everywhere a strong tendency to spread themselves; and when the vital force of the new prophetic message is strongest, its self-propagating power is strongest too. The analogy, however, works also on the darker side. Just as the baser elements of civilization—the taste for alcohol, and

its cheap and easy supply, for example—have a terrible faculty for passing on infection to neighbouring communities, so we too often find that religions borrow from one another their degenerate features instead of their best. It is rarely if ever that we meet with a religion free from syncretism, and in very many cases the adoption of foreign elements has been a symptom of decay. But sometimes it has been otherwise; and in any case we have to recognize that this mixture is a regular phenomenon in the history of religion, and may be beneficent. All depends, of course, on the character of the new infusion.

The parallel has its place in the apologetic of Christian Missions. Only what is valuable, and of universal value, passes from nation to nation, and becomes part of the world's wealth. Railways are covering the face of the earth: no one proposes to form companies for extending travel by bullock-wagon. Inventions are sometimes limited in scope to certain parts of the world, and would be useless in a climate different from that for which they were designed. Among religions there are only three which show any ambition to become world forces. Islam is spreading in countries where low animistic cults prevail. Buddhism shows a tendency to expand, and to struggle back to earlier and purer forms. It has even attracted a few European converts. The 'Buddhist Society' in our own midst declares its membership open to all who are interested in the study of the subject, irrespective of personal belief; but articles in its Journal show that it includes some real Buddhists. Whether counted or

weighed, the total number of converts Islam and Buddhism together have made in Europe and America would be easily distanced by any of the smallest sects of Christendom. Other religions keep themselves rigidly to their own countries or communities. Zoroastrianism, which has far more to offer than any of them, refuses to admit a single proselyte. Hinduism keeps its grip on India, but does not attempt to expand. Shintoism is peculiar to Japan. And so on. In contrast to this, Christianity is found to make its appeal everywhere. By far the most powerful apology for Christianity produced in our time is the *Historical Catalogue of Printed Bibles*, recently completed for the Bible Society by Messrs. Darlow and Moule. Four massive volumes, one of English and three of foreign languages, give us a complete bibliography, the fruit of many years' unremitting labour, and tell us what has been done so far in making the Bible known to the world. It is seen that while the premier society alone has published the whole Bible or parts of it in 450 separate dialects,[1] there is only one literary masterpiece that can speak in more than one-tenth as many languages as the Bible, and that is the *Pilgrim's Progress*! John Bunyan has passed the hundred, and Thomas à Kempis reaches about half that total. But where are the classics of Islam or Buddhism? Where are the great works of secular literature, or the authoritative expositions of Pure Reason, by which surely the Rationalist Press Association ought to be striving to compete with Christianity in the taming of the degenerate and the

[1] The figures are given up to May, 1913.

savage? And since there is no answer forthcoming, we may go on to recall the fact that all these versions represent results such as no other literature has ever pretended to match. Wherever this Book has gone it has uplifted and humanized and civilized the men who have yielded to it. And these are of all sorts and conditions: no part of the world is unrepresented, and no degree of culture. Our English Bible has been for centuries the one Book of otherwise unlettered peasants, and the first Book in the library of men of genius and men of learning. But the gulf between these is not as great as that which separates the races reached by the Bible Society.[1] The *Catalogue* includes scores of versions in the simplest and rudest dialects on earth, together with versions in elaborate literary idioms read by the learned alone. At page 1713 nearly fifty editions are described under the heading 'Zulu'; at page 1333 we begin to note over a hundred in Sanskrit, including some where Hebrew poetry is rendered in classical verse form. Some seventy pages describe for us the Bible in Chinese. There is classical language and colloquial, the latter in some twenty different forms. The next entry takes us off to North-West Canada, where the Bible Society has provided Gospels for the Chipewyan Indians, a tribe of some 500 souls. We turn the pages, and pass from Asia and America to Europe, from the rude jargon of small wild tribes, reduced to writing first in order to carry the Bible message, to the stately and sonorous dialect of some ancient

[1] The rest of this paragraph repeats a page of my review of the *Historical Catalogue* in the *International Review of Missions* for January, 1913.

civilization. No part of the world is unrepresented. In Arctic cold the Eskimos have read the Gospels for nearly two centuries in their own tongue. In India wild hill tribes like the Todas, though they number less than a thousand persons, may read the same words that the Brahman studies in Sanskrit: the unity of highest and lowest is reached in Christ. But here indeed is a point which might be most effectively proved by simply transcribing the alphabetic list for a few pages, beginning wherever we chance to open, and appending notes to locate successively the unknown names. And when we remember that all these versions arose out of a demand, and then created a demand—that they are not books for ornament or curiosity, but for use—we have the evidential value of the *Catalogue* in view once more. It is no racial faith that inspires the Book, but a world-religion, one designed for all the world, and already welcomed by representatives of all the world alike.

Till the R. P. A. magicians will do the same by their enchantments, or the missionaries of Islam or Buddhism enter into serious competition with the messengers of the Cross for the uplift of mankind, we may claim that Christianity has proved its claim overwhelmingly. Our study of Comparative Religion has made us thankful for the truth understood by those who have not yet received the Gospel, and has removed the reproach which narrower views of God brought upon religion. He has not left Himself without witness anywhere, nor allowed a small proportion of His children to monopolize the life-giving knowledge of Himself. But the more carefully and sympathetically we

study other religions, the more clearly does it appear that Christ completes and crowns them all. The mission of the Church to all peoples of the world approves itself as the discharging of a debt due to every man as man. The Gospel by its fruits has shown how beneficent its message is wherever it is faithfully preached. Foreign Missions, for the scientific student of the evolution of culture, become justified as an indispensable instrument for bringing out the latent possibilities of backward tribes, and developing to their highest ethical level the life of the more advanced races. If this is true—and we eagerly challenge denial—the Student Volunteer Missionary Union, with its amazing growth in universities of every land, becomes very easily intelligible. It is no vague or antiquated cry that has called out the life service of thousands from the most cultured classes of our youth. The young man or woman who can look into the world's future is not likely to think life thrown away when a place in such a movement offers itself to satisfy the loftiest ambition. Careers of fame and profit and usefulness are open to brains and industry at home; but what is the attraction of the best of them compared with the work of him who goes to be the pioneer of a Golden Age for all the world?

CHAPTER IV

The Christ That is to Be

We have tried to follow the apologetic of Foreign Missions to its logical results, and have summed up the modern Christian position towards other religions. In a sentence it comes to this, that we are convinced of Christ's claim to crown all religions—to heighten and make permanent everything in them that is good, and to destroy all that is not good by the energy of a perfect ideal. If a centenary commemoration fittingly opened with a survey of the past, it must naturally close with a look into the future. We cannot hope to prophesy what that future will bring; but we can at any rate form some estimate of our duty. There are many urgent practical problems that need settling. What is the form in which we are to present Christianity to the world? What are its vital doctrines, and what may we leave to be open questions? What are our aims as to the constitution of the Church in the mission-field? What policy does missionary statesmanship dictate as to the use of our forces and the methods of co-operation? And many more.

Since this book has no pretensions towards exhaustiveness, even in its own restricted area, it is obvious that we may leave a large number of practical questions untouched, and especially those

which can only be determined by men with experience on the foreign field. I shall keep to the limitations of my title, and discuss only the missionary message and motive and mandate in the light of the comparative study of religion.

I

Perhaps the very first question on which we must get our minds perfectly clear is this, Does it really matter what a man believes? We feel quite sure that God will act justly and lovingly towards those who are kept from the knowledge of His highest truth by no fault of their own. What motive, then, is there strong enough to justify the Churches in so great an expenditure of money and men?—and those its very best, for no other will do.

Now we must admit, and even emphasize, that the New Testament knows nothing of punishment to fall on men for an intellectual unbelief honestly held. 'He that disbelieveth shall be condemned' is read at the end of the Second Gospel, but in the appendix which textual criticism unanimously rejects to-day, as absent in our oldest manuscripts and in second century translations. In the Authorized Version the Fourth Evangelist (iii. 36) is made to say, 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' But the Revisers rightly render 'obeyeth not' in significant antithesis to the first clause[1]: it is moral, not intellectual, rebellion that brings the penalty

[1] For a discussion of ἀπειθεῖν, see 'Lexical Notes from the Papyri' in *Expositor* VII. vi. 89, 91.

The verse tells us indeed that faith brings life, but it is the faith of loyal obedience and trust. That mere intellectual orthodoxy has no power to save is reiterated by Scripture everywhere. Correct knowledge of the highest truth may be held by the very devils, as James the Lord's brother reminds us. In solemn denunciation of the orthodox teachers of Judaism, Christ Himself warned those who searched the Scriptures, thinking to have eternal life in them, while they would not come to Him to have life. W. M. Bunting's great hymn to the Holy Spirit[1] sums up the most solemn teaching of the New Testament in words that expose a peril to which all orthodoxy is liable :

> If e'er to forms of truth I gave
> The homage due, great Lord, to Thee,
> E'er deemed the Cross could, spell-like, save
> While yet Thou dwelledst not in me,
> Reprove my folly, but forgive,
> And make me understand and live.

The real nature of the blessing conferred by the purest and highest conception of God will appear presently. Meanwhile let us note what the voice of Jesus says to us about the future destiny of the 'heathen.' We are not left to conjecture as to the principles upon which they are to be judged. There can be little doubt, I think, that the 'nations' in Matt. xxv. 32 are as usual the Gentiles, which in this context will mean those who have not heard the Gospel. It is only by this that we can understand the *surprise* of the 'righteous,' who, if they

[1] No. 770 in the last edition of 'Wesley's Hymns' (1876). Why it does not appear in our present hymn-book is one of the mysteries.

had been Christians, would have had this great Scripture enshrined in their hearts as their Lord's most precious encouragement for the life of loving-kindness. If, then, the unevangelized heathen are primarily intended,[1] we have the clear law laid down that men are to be judged by God according to their behaviour to their fellow men. Kindly and unselfish behaviour to the meanest and least worthy of men is accepted as direct service done to the glorified Christ: neglect—it is tremendously significant that neglect, not cruelty, is spoken of—is an insult to His majesty, who is 'not ashamed to call them brothers.' How stupendous a field of 'discovery' awaits the world in the implications of this all too familiar passage will appear to every thinking reader.

Now if this is God's demand from all mankind, and the teaching of this passage clearly implies that there are 'heathen' men who can rise to it, where does the advantage of Christian belief come in? Not only men who never heard the Gospel, but men who have heard and in perfect honesty rejected it, will have their place in the vaster energies of the next world determined by their treatment of their brethren here. And we are conceding gladly that neither ignorance of Christ nor honest inability to give Him intellectual belief is a bar to the living of a life which will sometimes put to shame that of many who sincerely profess the Christian name. What, then, is the claim we make for the Faith, and why does it really matter after all what a man believes? I think the answer can admit of no

[1] I say 'primarily' because *a fortiori* the principle applies to Christian nations. Nothing is eliminated but the note of surprise.

possible doubt. Throughout the New Testament—though the fact has been in all ages grievously overlooked by a too narrow view of the place of faith in Christian theology—the right relation of the human soul to God is exclusively regarded as a means to an end. If it is more blessed to give than to receive, He whose name is the Blessed God must be exalted above all receiving for Himself. Nor can we give Him anything but His own gifts. Love and service to Him must be offered through those whom He has appointed to be receivers of what is due to Him. So it is that love towards our fellow man pays our debt to the All-Father: sin against him, whether of omission or commission, is sin against God. And the whole teaching of the New Testament is concentrated on the task of driving home the central fact that a right understanding of God is the most powerful of all means for producing right conduct. To love God in any sense that deserves the name draws with it the necessary consequence of love to man, and to love is the fulfilment of every righteous law: a law that cannot be thus fulfilled is condemned. The one purpose of the New Testament, then, is to bring to us the knowledge of God as He is, by the only way that can bring it to us in its perfection. Jesus Christ enables us to see the Father and realize His love for us; and he who surrenders himself to the gracious influence perfectly is impelled by the mightiest power yet seen on earth to love his neighbour as himself.

There is a converse to this proposition which must not be ignored. The withdrawal of this mighty power brings into human life a temptation

that only very strong souls can withstand. He who, even on grounds of sincere intellectual conviction, ceases to fear God, has a terribly weakened motive for regarding man. I have been insisting strongly on the fact that a great many agnostics are such from sheer honesty; and I acknowledge ungrudgingly that their agnosticism is sometimes nearer to the mind of Christ than the indolent orthodoxy of some who call Him Lord. But it will hardly be questioned that a multitude of deniers have small claim to such a verdict. How often has the 'emancipation' been more moral than intellectual! The flinging away of religious restraint is not generally likely to encourage the unselfish life. And when we ask what Rationalism has done for society, the answer is hardly doubtful. Is it mere coincidence that the great national institutions of this country which strive to rescue and bless helpless children are born of fervently Christian impulses? Benjamin Waugh, Barnardo, Müller, and our own Stephenson—were they Rationalists? And could we imagine a 'Children's *Home*' earning its title as these magnificent institutions have done, if their inspiration had been an atmosphere of denial, and 'the good Lord Jesus' were never named by those who lovingly and successfully tend the children committed to their care?

It is a notorious fact that even with so mighty a force to drive us, to rise into the lofty heights of duty is appallingly hard. The man who has achieved it is the very climax of the Creator's work. Brain is great, but too many of its most wonderful accomplishments have been associated

with qualities which have rendered their possessor the object of pity or hatred from other men. He who perfectly loves his fellows, and lives wholly to help and bless them, has attained a rarer triumph, as even the instinct of humanity confesses. The mad Nietzsche will serve as exception to prove the rule. It naturally follows that we need the most powerful combination of forces to produce in us ideal goodness, defined as perfectly unselfish devotion to the interests of others. The claim of the modern defender of Christianity will be that the highest and purest conception of God proves the most powerful of all instruments for producing goodness. Where other forces produce their tens, Christ produces hundreds. Moreover, the less our belief in Christ is adulterated, as it were, with ideas irrelevant to the supreme purpose, the more potent it will be. For ethical results the operative principle in the Christian religion is the exaltation of Christ as Divine Saviour, and the realizing of Him in His nearness to the soul. Overload this with ideas unrelated to it, and there is danger lest the mind will give to these the attention due to what is weightier. If means of grace, ecclesiastical attachment, subsidiary doctrines of our creed, help us towards more vital realization of Christ, and of God through Him, they will be of service towards the ultimate end of religion; but if they draw off our attention towards themselves, they weaken the ethical energy of the Faith. It does matter, therefore, what we believe, and even what form of Christianity we accept; for we need in our human weakness the most living force we can command to make us what we ought to be. The universally acknowledged

eminence of the Society of Friends in philanthropic devotion is—to give a clear illustration—not a little connected with the fact that they are less preoccupied than most Christians with other than the vital elements in religion.

If this is true, we can easily see how the argument for Missions stands to-day. In our ideals of social reform we feel that we cannot be satisfied until equality of opportunity has been won for every young man and woman entering on life. That is, we instinctively feel it unjust that a highly talented person should be debarred from using talents to the advantage of the community by the mere accident of birth ; and in the case of more ordinary persons we are anxious that each should find the work most suited to capacity. This is the purpose of the educational ladder which we try to set up, from elementary school to secondary school and university, with public money to neutralize as far as possible all disadvantages arising solely from poverty. My illustration is based on what is generally admitted : I am not referring to the much wider meaning that advanced reformers put into the phrase ' equality of opportunity.' A principle of this kind is really bound up with the first law of Christianity. If I truly love another man as much as I love myself, I must obviously be ready to give him every opportunity I myself enjoy, if it is in my power, and to help him with sympathy and guidance that he may use the opportunity. Apply this to natives of Africa, India, China, and the whole non-Christian world. If I have a religion which makes it a hundredfold easier for me to live an unselfish life, it cannot conceivably be consonant

with that religion that I should keep to myself so great a help towards the fulfilment of God's primary command. Will not the 'heathen' rise up in the judgement against me and condemn me for selfish appropriation of the gift of God, which He must have meant for all His children? My brother from afar says to me in effect, 'I have not lived the unselfish life, or behaved to my neighbour as I ought. But I had no call like yours, no beautiful and winsome Example, no promise of an indwelling Power that could master my passions and tame my unruly will. You knew all this, and you knew I had a right to know it as well as yourself. Why did you not tell me your good news, and give me a chance of being what I ought to be?' In other words, we are 'debtors,' as Paul declared, bound by the very fundamental law of our religion to pass it on to every man who does not yet possess it, *because* it is incomparably the mightiest power in enabling weak humanity to achieve the life that God demands.

II

'A fundamental law of our religion' I have called it, which compels us to go into all the world and tell our good news to every son of man. It would have startled our fathers had they been told that we must stop and prove that the Founder Himself laid this foundation. We have to stop and prove the validity of a great many axioms in this questioning age; nor need we complain if the process ends in a firmer grip of the fact that Jesus Himself had the world outlook. For apologetic

purposes, of course, we must not go immediately to the Great Commission which so majestically closes the First Gospel. The scene of those words is laid in the post-resurrection time, and we are told that all such discourses had their birth in the subjectivity of the disciples. For much the same reason we are forbidden to remember the 'other sheep' of the Fourth Gospel. I do not feel any compulsion to halt in my argument and defend our right to use these two sources, conspicuous though they are in the precious little group of sayings which give the missionary confidence that his commission is from no mere man. We can prove our case without them, and reclaim them at the end. Surely it is irrational to lay such exclusive stress on words in which Jesus declared the restriction of His own mission to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel.' The meaning of that restriction is obvious enough. It needed no preternatural insight to realize that Jesus Himself would not be allowed many years for His work within the limits of Judaea and Galilee. One of the Twelve seems to have realized it months before the end, and to have shaped his course accordingly. The others, blinded by their enthusiasm, never guessed what deadly forces were gathering momentum with every month of that too popular ministry. To prepare the 'remnant,' as Isaiah would have called them, for the work to which the whole providential ordering of the nation's history pointed—to sift the host of the Lord before a campaign which could find no place for the fearful and afraid, nor for any willing fighters who were less than heroic—that was the utmost that the Master could do in the brief time allotted

Him. His supreme work was to be achieved not by golden words and travels rich with mercy, but in awful silence and helpless suffering on the Cross that gave His missionaries their gospel. But that He meant them to take that gospel far beyond the limits of the house of Israel is plain from the oldest documents without using those which interpreted so well the apostolic tradition. In that long mental struggle with which His ministry opened, had He not before Him 'the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them'? What are we to suppose He was thinking of when that vision spread itself before His soul? Had He never read the great prophecy[1] which declared it 'too light' a task for the servant of Jehovah 'to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel'? Was Paul the first to discover in that most familiar of all the prophets a destiny limited only by 'the end of the earth'? I have mentioned only one among many prophetic voices which we know to have been very much in the Lord's mind. If Israel became particularist, and claimed a monopoly in the favour of God, it was not the fault of the great teachers who so emphatically set before God's people an ambition worthy of their name. To make Jesus less universal in His outlook than His greatest forerunners is too grotesque an absurdity to need refutation.

One explanation only could be ventured for silence on the part of Jesus, were such silence even plausibly established. Great stress has been laid recently on the eschatological element in His mission. The thoroughgoing upholders of this interpretation

[1] Isa. xlix. 6; cf. Acts xiii. 47.

would make us believe that Jesus never hoped to mend the world, but only to end it and inaugurate a better. If so, and the end was to come within the generation contemporary with His earthly life, there was clearly no room for a world mission; and He could never have declared that the good news of the Kingdom '*must* first be preached unto all the nations.' Now the eschatological interpretation of 'the Kingdom' has exceedingly strong claims on our attention. It is a key that has successfully unlocked not a few mysteries. We can acknowledge this heartily, and yet not allow it to be a master-key. The Gospel is in fact far too complex in its mysteries of grace to be unlocked by any master-key. In every science we meet with enthusiasts who have discovered the one principle which explains everything at once; and we are justified in the suspicion that comes by a sure instinct to all who know. That the kingdom of God was for Jesus in the Unseen is certain: that He looked for its early manifestation seems no less assured. But when a too rigorous insistence on the exclusiveness of this central thought requires us to weed out sayings as well-attested as any in our documents, we may reasonably ask whether the theory has not been abusing the limited monarchy which it lawfully claims. That the Gospel must be universally proclaimed before the Advent is an unambiguous saying in our oldest narrative.[1] That Jesus warned the Jews that they might be thrust out from the Kingdom, and their places taken by men who should come from the ends of the earth,[2] goes back to that lost common source,

[1] Mark xiii. 10. [2] Luke xiii. 28, 29=Matt. viii. 11, 12.

older than Mark's Gospel, the Aramaic original of which most critics attribute to the Apostle Matthew, according to the well-known notice preserved in Papias. The same document had the similar warning of the Baptist that God needed not Abraham's children after the flesh to fulfil His purpose; He could raise up children to Abraham out of those stones.[1] The universalism of the prophets, then, was heard in tones as emphatic as ever in the very age that listened to Jesus. Going back to Mark, we note how on the one occasion when Jesus could indulge the luxury of helping an outsider, He tempted her faith to make its venture with the hint 'Let the children *first* be filled.'[2] In His blessing on the deathless deed of the unnamed woman at Bethany, He speaks of 'this gospel' as about to be 'preached throughout the whole world.'[3] One other gospel source we may draw on—the special information which Luke collected, presumably during the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea. There have been attempts to claim the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel as the evangelist's free composition. But they are crowded with delicate touches which exactly fit the ideas of pious Jews in the period to which they are assigned, and entirely fail to fit any later time. With the highest estimate of Luke's genius as a writer,[4] it seems absolutely incredible that he could have evolved such from his own historic imagination,

[1] Luke iii. 8=Matt. iii. 9. [2] Mark vii. 27. [3] Mark xiv. 9.

[4] I can hardly resist the temptation to allude *en passant* to the progress of Luke's rehabilitation as an historian. New inscriptions are noted in the *Expositor* for November, 1912, and January, 1913, which prove that Quirinius really was legate of Syria in 8–6 B.C., and Lysanias Tetrarch of Abilene during the reign of Augustus. We are getting on

or would have cared to try. It is therefore highly suggestive that Luke has 'delicately coloured the introductory history with universalism,' as Professor Harnack puts it. The universalism was there, among pious and humble people, who kept up the tradition of Israel's golden age, and read Isaiah, Jonah and Malachi in the light that the narrow Pharisaic schools had never quenched. Indeed the Pharisees themselves, as Professor Harnack shows in the opening chapter of his great work on the *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, had a progressive school that eagerly preached a universal propaganda. 'Love men and draw them to the law' was a maxim of the justly famous Hillel, Gamaliel's master. It was 'not long before the destruction of Jerusalem, in all probability,' says Harnack, that the anti-foreign reaction won its complete victory. Does it not follow that Luke had no need to 'colour' his picture? The burden of proof rests with those who would deny the presence of universalism in the religious environment of the early life of Jesus. And if that universalism was all around Him, it will take some cleverness to explain how He—on the most rigidly humanistic view of His Person—came to repudiate what so many men far below Him had fervently held for ages past.

The attitude of the historical Jesus of Nazareth towards a world propaganda is so vital a matter for us that I must spend a little more space on my demonstration. To harmonize the Christ of the Great Commission and the Fourth Gospel with the Jesus of our oldest records is essential if we are to have unflinching confidence in our missionary

mandate to-day. The 'Christ that is to be' must have no discontinuity with the Christ who has been or the Jesus in whom He dwelt, one with Him in personality, during those 'days of His flesh.' We might still go forward with enthusiasm to preach Christ among the nations, even if the dream of enthroning Him over the whole world came first to Paul, and never disturbed the strangely narrow outlook of his Lord! But we want to understand the Christ of our preaching; and if Jesus '*could* not' have bidden His followers go and make disciples of all the nations in His name, I confess that His human life becomes to me inconsistent with itself and with all the probabilities that emerge from an unflinchingly critical reading of the gospel story.

With this preface, then, I proceed to comment on the argument of Professor Harnack in the fourth chapter of his *Expansion*. However strongly we differ from this distinguished scholar's view of the central doctrine of Catholic Christianity, we owe him too great a debt to be light-hearted in repudiating his judgement on the interpretation of our Gospels. He has fairly crushed for us the criticism that would disintegrate the Lukan writings, and assigned dates to them and the first two Gospels which even conservative scholars like Dr. Sanday are afraid to accept, so early are they. His *Expansion* itself is a book that claims the most careful study from all whose master-passion it is that the Church should repeat in our own day the triumphs of her first three centuries. The keener, therefore, is the disappointment raised by the first reading of these eight pages on 'Jesus Christ and the Universal

Mission.'[1] We are warned off the ground by the dogmatic statement (p. 41) that Paul knew nothing of such a general command as the Great Commission ; and there is appended a footnote :

> It is impossible and quite useless to argue with those who see nothing but an inadmissible bias in the refusal to accept traditions about Jesus eating and drinking and instructing His disciples after death.

Perhaps. And yet there are many of us, keen modernists in all our thinking, who do honestly believe that science as well as experimental religion is accumulating evidence for the objective reality of that after-life of Jesus, to which it is no valid objection to say that it presents phenomena beyond our reason. If the ' spiritual body ' were proved nothing but a duplicate of the earthly body, we should only have fresh mysteries to solve in the place of the one that seemed to be removed : it is more reasonable to acknowledge the existence of something which must in the nature of things transcend our present powers of apprehension. It is not on historical or critical grounds after all that Harnack and others ' refuse to accept ' such ' traditions,' but on the strength of a philosophy natural enough in itself, yet hardly final, as modern developments in the criticism of the miracles of healing suffice to show.

Harnack's conviction that the idea of a world mission was not contemplated by Jesus is based

[1] I can only examine very summarily an argument highly condensed and crowded with detail. I should like to refer for fuller treatment to an admirable article by the Rev. George Jackson in the *Expository Times* for November, 1911 (xxiii. 54–62).

on two or three texts from the Synoptic Gospels. There is Matt. x. 23 and xv. 24, with other subsidiary passages, admittedly less decisive. The former is, of course, to be placed with Mark ix. 1 as evidence of the expectation of Jesus that the Advent would be within the lifetime of His own disciples. Is this adequate proof that Mark xiii. 10 is 'an historical theologoumenon, which is hardly original?' If by a careful exegesis we can reconcile these two sayings, does not the only critical ground for rejecting that contained in the older Gospel vanish? It is rejected purely on subjective arguments, just as the word 'first' in Mark vii. 27 'is not to be pressed.' And, as we can see clearly enough, *both* these sayings fulfilled themselves within that generation. The apostles of the circumcision never 'completed' the evangelization of the 'cities of Israel'; and those of the Gentiles did proclaim the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire before the giant awoke, too late to crush a rival power that had established itself firmly everywhere. We do not adequately realize what that generation was destined to see. We know how the Son of Man 'came' to the judgement of the Jew, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus. We forget the yet weightier judgement of the Gentile. When Rome decided to 'persecute for the Name,' to declare a war of extermination upon the Church, it was veritably a 'judgement of this world,' and a casting-out of the prince thereof, little though he dreamed that so it would be. Diocletian understood, though Nero was too dull. But that the expectation of Jesus as to His Advent was fully satisfied by the events of the third quarter of that first century, so

uniquely momentous for the religious future of the world, would certainly not be claimed. It seems to be characteristic of prophecy that the great principles of Divine Providence, insight into which is the prophet's supreme qualification, fulfil themselves first in a partial and local manner, and lead on to a series of larger fulfilments, culminating in a far-off issue too vast for the human mind to grasp without an age-long preparation. It is like a landscape in a mountain country, where the same line of sight strikes across low foothills a mile away to lofty shoulders farther off and huge peaks on the horizon, and only rare atmospheric conditions enable the eye to distinguish between them. The illustration may help us to realize how this perspective of the future was a necessary condition of the humanity of Jesus, so that in foretelling His Advent He used much imagery that belonged to the near future fulfilment, in the midst of that which concerned an ultimate reality only to be expressed in symbol, and destined to tarry for its complete manifestation till countless ages have passed away.

The other passage urged by Harnack is much less difficult, and we have anticipated the answer. The case of the Syro-Phoenician woman was, of course, '*an exceptional case* for Jesus; and the exception proves the rule'[1]—which is only that for very obvious reasons[2] His own earthly ministry was limited to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel.' The argument drawn from these two passages is, I venture to think, altogether overbalanced by Harnack's very cheerful admission

[1] Op. cit. p. 39; the italics are Harnack's. [2] See above, p. 133.

as to two others. He cites the prophecy of Matt. viii. 11, 12 (Luke xiii. 28, 29), and declares that its 'prophetic manner arouses no suspicion of its authenticity. . . . Why should not Jesus have said this?' The parallel from John the Baptist follows. Then again, 'The programme of the speech at Nazareth (Luke iv. 26, 27) is here of primary importance, but even in it the universalism of Jesus does not seem to rise above that of the prophets.' Really, if it is securely established that His universalism rose as high as theirs, in words actually spoken during His earthly ministry, we have as much as we want. Why is it necessary to explain away anticipations that the Gospel would be proclaimed in the whole world, if Jesus actually said that God's table should be filled with guests from east and west, and that God's prophets now as in the days of Elijah and Elisha might pass by an ungrateful Israel and bring blessing to the Gentile? How were the guests to come unless they were invited? and how were the messengers to go unless they were sent? We might almost be content to concede all the limitations forced on our Synoptic records by a disputable criticism and a strained exegesis, when the use of Paul's own question,[1] with its homely and obvious common sense, compels an opposite deduction from words which are left!

There will probably be many readers of the foregoing pages to whom the repetition of these questionings as to recorded words of Jesus will be distasteful enough. For them there is no difference between words uttered after the resurrection and those uttered before the Master's death; nor are

[1] Rom. x. 14, 15.

they careful to know whether a saying comes from 'Q'[1] or the Gospel of John. I need not, however, stay to prove to them either my own deep sympathy with their feeling or the necessity in an apologetic argument of laying our foundations on a rock which opponents will not try to undermine. I have sought to show that even the residue of authentic sayings which the most brilliant and learned of critics will allow to be relevant contains the justification of those other sayings which he will not admit. But why did the Master say so little about the world mission? Or, if He really said much more, what sealed the lips of those evangelists who have given us relatively so little, on the widest possible interpretation? The answer lies in the most fundamental characteristics of the teaching of Jesus. The Sower everywhere sowed seed: He did not plant ripe corn. Some of it sprang up at once and filled the earth with a golden harvest; and some of it is barely green in the furrows even now. Dull wits have bidden us justify His omissions if we can. Why did He never say anything about the accursed institution of slavery? Why, if the doctrine of the Atonement has any truth, did it find no place in His teaching—except, of course, in an isolated phrase[2] which He 'could not' have uttered? And so on. These wise men have never, one would think, tried to teach a child. Else they would have known that the most efficacious of the true teacher's methods is the

[1] The first letter of the German word for 'source'—a convenient and non-committal symbol in general use to denote the Greek collection of Sayings used by the First and Third Evangelists.

[2] Mark x. 45. Need I add that I do *not* isolate that phrase?

skilful guidance by which the pupil is led to find a thing out for himself. Jesus never declared the abrogation of those old-world tabus on food which had served a good purpose long ago. But He did declare the self-evidencing truth that defilement could not come to the man from that which never touched anything but his body. And the evangelist —once 'interpreter' to that Peter who needed a heavenly vision to make the inference plain to him[1]— breaks his rigid rule and interpolates four laconic words of comment: it followed, then, that all kinds of food were clean! But long before Mark wrote those words down, his master had learned a very much more far-reaching inference. So it was with all the seed-thoughts of Jesus. They were not ready-made articles of manufacture—they were spirit and life, and they could not help germinating. This absolutely central characteristic of the Great Teacher's method, on which I dwelt from another point of view in the previous chapter,[2] prepares us for realizing that our missionary mandate would not, after all, be weakened even by the complete acceptance of the case argued by the great thinker I have been quoting, the acknowledged leader of Liberal theology in Germany and the world as a whole. We may fitly close this discussion with Dr. Harnack's own words, all the more impressive when we recall his position of detachment from doctrines that we hold dear:

> Rightly and wisely people no longer noticed the local and temporal traits either in this historical

[1] Mark vii. 19; Acts x. 15. Mark is called Peter's 'ex-interpreter' by Papias.

[2] See pp. 109 ff.

> sketch [in the Gospels] or in these sayings. They found there a vital love of God and men, which may be described as implicit universalism, a discounting of everything external (position, personality, sex, outward worship, &c.) which made irresistibly for inwardness of character; and a protest against the entire doctrines of the 'ancients,' which gradually rendered antiquity valueless. One of the greatest revolutions in the history of religion was initiated in this way—initiated and effected, moreover, without any revolution! All that Jesus Christ promulgated was the overthrow of the temple, and the judgement impending upon the nation and its leaders. He shattered Judaism, and brought out the kernel of the religion of Israel. Thereby—i.e. by his preaching of God as the Father, *and by His own death*[1]—he founded the universal religion, which at the same time was the religion of the Son.

Christianity, then, as a world-religion does actually date from Jesus of Nazareth's first and last sermon in the home of His early years, and from pregnant sayings, scattered over the records of His ministry, which could not possibly have fallen unheeded on the ears of men to whom He Himself was incomparably more than even His most memorable words. It might seem that we have been dwelling on the past to a disproportionate length in a chapter that by its title invites us to look towards the future. But Jesus is Christ, and 'Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.' We cannot tell with certainty what He will be in His world-wide Kingdom except by learning what He was when He first 'reigned from the Tree' over the awe-stricken hearts of those who obeyed His royal call.

[1] Harnack's italics. I quote throughout from Dr. Moffatt's translation of the *Ausbreitung* (second edition, 1908).

We gain our strength and enthusiasm for the future by gazing yet again upon that past which is ever present, and all our problems will find their adequate solution by a truer understanding of it. One of the leaders of the German Liberal School lately reviewed in caustic language the work of a medical man, Herr Lomer, who wrote about 'Sick Christendom,' with diagnosis and treatment in proper medical style. Professor Niebergall[1] answers him according to his folly:

> *Diagnosis:* Acute pantheistic moralistic intellectualitis.
>
> *Treatment:* An acquaintance with the nature of Religion, Christian Religion, and Christian Belief.

The treatment suggested would be highly beneficial for a good many shallow unbelievers of our time, who have managed to assure themselves that 'the good Lord Jesus has had His day.' A little understanding of history, a little intelligent study of the works now being accomplished all over the world in the name of Jesus, might work some remarkable conversions among the superior persons who sniff at 'superstition' as outworn.

III

We are sent, then, by the life even more than the words of Jesus, to preach the Gospel to all the nations. What gospel? Has the nature of the message changed through the operation of the Time

[1] *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, xxxvii. 58.

Spirit; or is it modified by reaction from the non-Christian religions which the Christian missionary strives to supplant? How do 'our unhappy divisions' affect the doctrine we teach those who are outside our Faith? Each of these three questions would need a treatise for its answer: indeed treatises are written or writing for the purpose. 'The Faith and its Interpretation' is the province of a department of the Free Church Commission now sitting. The reaction of non-Christian religions is, as already observed (p. 96), a prominent subject in the masterly Report to the Edinburgh Conference which has been so often quoted in this book. 'Co-operation and Unity' is the subject of another Commission which reported to that Conference. With these object-lessons as to the magnitude of the issues involved, it seems an impertinence to spend a few pages in summarizing the opinions of others, and almost worse to advance any of my own. But it would be cowardly to pass such vital questions by, and I feel I must make some sort of a statement to complete the scheme that my subject demands.

On the first question I had much to say in my opening chapter. A period in which there has been abnormal development in every department of human knowledge must necessarily witness a corresponding development in the answer Christianity gives to the problems of life and thought, so many of which are absolutely new. When we try to gather up the general impression, we find it amounting to this, that there is increasing emphasis laid now upon the central and fundamental doctrines, and a greater readiness to leave open some which used to claim undue prominence. The Fatherhood

of God, the Deity of Jesus and His supremacy as Saviour of men—these are the great doctrines on which men of widely differing Christian communions can join in fellowship to-day. I might illustrate the fact by quoting the formula unanimously accepted, after prolonged and most careful discussion, by the representative committee described in a former chapter (p. 20 f.). A great inter-denominational movement was recommended to describe as its aim 'to lead [its members] into full acceptance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God and Saviour of the world, and to active service of the Christian Church; to promote among them regular habits of prayer and Bible study; to keep before them the importance and urgency of the evangelization of the world, the Christian solution of social problems, and the permeation of public life with Christian ideals; and to enlist them in whole-hearted service of these objects.' And with this was placed the simple form in which the young man or woman on joining this fellowship is asked to say 'I desire . . . to declare my faith in God through Jesus Christ, His Son, my Lord and Saviour, and the surrender of my life to Him.' It is almost laughable to think what our committee would have come to, had any of us thought it vital to define 'the Christian Church,' to state the nature of Inspiration, to frame a doctrine of the Sacraments, or make a precise declaration as to Retribution, Apostolical Succession, Transubstantiation, Presbyterian and Congregational and Methodist forms of Church government, Higher Criticism or Anti-criticism. All these and other causes would have found their warm defenders. But in spite of the

conviction with which we held our several views on these subjects, there was an eloquent silence about them throughout the day's deliberations, even as there had been throughout the fortnight at Edinburgh. We were concerned with *essentials*, and on these we were, from the first, entirely at one.

I think it would be very largely agreed that this attitude is typical of Christian thought in the West to-day. I am naturally leaving out the Roman Church, which still professes to sit like Canute on the shore and bid the tide ebb at its will. But Modernism is giving the *Semper Eadem* a great deal of trouble, and the Papal chair may need moving on yet, like Canute's own. Returning to the freer forms of Christianity which alone can claim the future, we notice that this very rapid and important *rapprochement* has been attained without any conspicuous growth of indifference as to the secondary things in our creeds. It is primarily due to the intensity of our feeling that Christ is everything for Christianity, and that every element in a Christian's creed must be tested by its relation to Him, as the one Revealer of God and Saviour of men. On matters of importance, where difference of opinion is consistent with unfaltering loyalty to Him, we feel instinctively that the vanishing of difference is unlikely, and almost undesirable. Men are born with temperaments which refuse to be forced into a single groove, and there is room enough within the freedom with which Christ has set us free. There is above everything the difference which separates Christians as soon as Sacraments are mentioned. It is typical and fundamental, and there seems no reason to expect that it will ever be obliterated in

the 'Church militant here on earth.' Its only real evil is the intolerance it generates. The Roman denies the Anglican minister validity of orders, reality of sacraments, or a place in the Catholic Church. The stiffer kind of Anglican does exactly the same to the Wesleyan. And the strongest proof that this series—Roman, High Anglican, Free Churchman—represents in this regard a progressive approximation to the mind of Christ, is the fact that the Anglican recognizes the Roman, while we readily recognize both, provided that they 'love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.'

The same may be said of other permanent differences within the True Church. The conservative temperament will always produce a tendency to lean on authority, just as the liberal makes men impatient of it. At one extreme there will be an apotheosis of Church organization, at the other an exaltation of anarchy. In one camp the march of thought—scientific, critical, philosophical—is watched with suspicion or anger; in the other it is even prematurely welcomed. And here again it is the accompanying intolerance which alone makes real mischief. It exists in both camps, and most violently in the Extreme Right and Left, which condemn themselves chiefly by this fact. 'Let both grow together until the harvest' was spoken of wheat and weeds. But we may be quite sure that the Master would say the same of the many varieties of good seed that are clothing His fields with green. Truth is One, but that does not mean that my conviction is true and the other man's conviction all false. Truth may be relative—a doctrine may be wholly true for me, and a widely different doctrine may be

equally true for my brother Christian. The reconciliation will come one day to our reason. Let it come to-day to our heart. The Red Cross Knight goes forth to-day to do battle with Error, as he went in Spenser's immortal allegory, and he does not go alone.

> A lovely ladie rode him faire beside,
> Upon a lowly asse more white than snowe,
> Yet she much whiter—

and her name was Una, the One. But there is no unity in Truth that we can see, except the unity of the Person who said 'I am the Truth.' Thank God, Christians are coming to see that: there has been a wonderful advance even within the period that we remember who are still in middle life. Our Foreign Missions have contributed not a little to this growth of tolerance, and in their turn they make the heaviest demand upon it. We must not and dare not bewilder the non-Christian world with a spectacle of acute divisions. Our brethren who cannot bring themselves to tolerate a doctrine or a Church order widely different from their own, yet equally held 'in Christ,' must ask themselves whether, after all, such forms are not preferable to paganism.

And this is just what is visible in the practice of Christian missionaries to-day. The Bible Society is behind all the Missions as an object-lesson of their unity; and a recognized comity already prevents a great amount of wasteful and injurious overlapping. It must, of course, go much further. But the very presence at Edinburgh of such a man as Bishop Gore, and the reading of a sympathetic

letter from a Roman ecclesiastic in the Pope's inner circle, were welcome indications that the facing of the non-Christian world is beginning to burst some bonds that held the Church fast for ages. We may not see 'Apostolical Succession' disappear, but it will matter very little if we find its champions ready to concert an onward march with Christians who follow the apostles in another division of the 'one army of the living God.' That this is coming to pass very strikingly on the mission-field is shown by many testimonies cited in the Edinburgh Report which has figured so largely in these pages. Missionaries were asked whether their experience had 'altered either in form or substance' their impression as to the 'most important and vital elements in the Christian gospel.' There is an inspiring unity in the diversity of the answers quoted. The Report tells us (p. 70) :

> The replies of the majority [of the missionary correspondents from China] may be summed up in the words of one : 'No change as to central doctrines, but greater hesitancy in fixing the circumference.'

Another, a Baptist, replies :

> Yes. Becoming less a churchman and more a Christian. Particular tenets of my own Church are falling into the background in view of man's need of Christ. The kingdom of God is greater than any Church, and Christianity than any creed.

From another country (Japan) and another communion comes an extract which one would greatly like to see unabridged. I quote a sentence or two from it as typical (p. 118) :

> 'My life in the East has taught me the need of simplicity in faith and practice, and I have found myself shedding quite a number of things which twenty-five years ago I should have considered as being of very vital importance. But amongst the things I have shed I have not found it necessary to include any of the articles of the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds, or my belief in Christianity as the supreme and perfect revelation of God to man.

The writer describes himself as 'having been changed from a more or less strait-laced Anglican to the nondescript Christian' that he is now. In what respects, the context shows; but I quote the words as illustrating the effect of mission work in dissipating inherited prejudices and preferences, in forcing first things to the first place, and making the Christian preacher forget his ecclesiastical and doctrinal labels and remember nothing but the Sovranty of Christ. It is the highest example of a tendency which idealists begin to see moving in the world at large, and regard as its brightest hope. Men absorbed in the furtherance of human welfare as a whole become very impatient of what the militarist calls 'patriotism,' in its petty limitation of outlook and its heavy toll of human life and happiness. They do not abjure the true patriotism, any more than a philanthropist abjures his family ties. Patriotism means a passionate ambition that our own country may be worthy of our love and pride, may never be led into anything unworthy of her past, and may be the pioneer of the nations in the promotion of peace and honour and righteousness. Even so the missionary who has imagination and faith for his work learns to transcend all sectional limitations and win the vision of the Catholic Church

which is grander far than any earthly embodiment of the ideal. He loves his own Church, and strives to make her ever worthier of his love, but she does not become the jealous rival of other communions. His joy in her triumphs is like the joy of a high-minded man when a near relative of his own has done some golden deed.

A natural corollary of this intensified concentration on the Divine Christ as the one Message of the Faith is a most remarkable tranquillity in the missionary mind as to subjects which greatly disturb good Christians at home. The question was asked of the missionary correspondents of the same Commission :

> To what extent do questions of ' higher criticism ' and other developments of modern Western thought exert an influence in your part of the mission-field, and what effect do they have on missionary work ?

The answers reported are as a whole wonderfully encouraging. The account (pp. 112–17) of the condition of things in Japan is extremely suggestive. There was the period when everything seemed shaken by a Unitarian propaganda from the West. But once again it proved that there was ' a removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.' The critical reaction did much harm for the time, but the missionaries expect to gain more than they lose. I resist a strong temptation to quote largely from this and other chapters of the Report, to show how much greater is the optimism of the missionaries than that of very many devout souls at home. One testimony will suffice

(p. 115), chosen for its special aptitude for the moral I am trying to draw:

> Just an honest and impartial presentation of the truth, with emphasis on the positive, saving elements of the gospel, is what is needed. When this course is pursued there is nothing to fear from the higher criticism—at least if it be not of the extreme type. The kernel of the gospel is what touches the Japanese, and they do not care much about secondary questions.

Surely this missionary (who would neither 'keep back the results of criticism' nor 'flaunt them before the people') gives the right message to the Church everywhere!

Need I point out how completely in harmony this conclusion is with the whole genius of our Methodist missionary work at home and abroad throughout these hundred years? We have always stood for the living experience of Christ as the supreme element in religion. We have shared the general 'shaking' in our views of the Bible, and even in our formulated Christology. We have been and still are deeply divided in these important matters, men's various temperaments and upbringings swaying them towards extremes of horror and of welcome to modernism in all its forms; while in men of balanced and open minds and wider knowledge there has been the readiness to march on fearlessly, but without undue haste or love of novelty for its own sake. Yet in all alike our salvation as a Church is still, as it ever has been, that we instinctively make personal experience the indispensable evidence of the Faith. The student goes to preach from his desk and his books, from patient assimilation of novel scientific

theories in biology or in biblical criticism that would have seemed to our fathers destructive of the very foundations of belief. The ploughman takes his rest from week-day toil in preaching out of a knowledge confined to one Book and the commentary of his own heart and life. But in the pulpit the ploughman and the scholar proclaim the same Divine Christ, and start from the same text: 'One thing I *know*, that whereas I was blind now I see.' It is this message which explains alike our Manchester Mission and our evangelization of Fiji. It inspired our cultured home missionaries, from John Wesley to Hugh Price Hughes, our humbly-born evangelists, with native genius unschooled, from John Nelson to Thomas Champness. And all our great names on the Missionary Society's roll of honour, from Thomas Coke to David Hill, brought the same gospel to the lands where they laboured for Christ. Are we, with such a heritage, to turn craven at the signs of the times, preparing to commit the Gospel to a blind defiance of knowledge? Surely we of all men are called by our history to 'speak to the people that they go forward'! We preach Christ in the language and the thought of our own day, but always as a present Saviour. In the Father's house are many abiding-places: the race, like the individual, moves on from one stage of development to another, and we are never at one stay. But into each of them the Man Divine goes before us to prepare a place for us, and we can fear no evil when He is with us and we follow Him. The religion of a great soul-certainty is the one which will hold the future. And if our beloved Methodism is true to this, we may feel wholly

assured that when our great-grandchildren keep the second centenary of the wonderful venture of faith which we recall to-day, the story of what God has wrought through our successors will be continuous with the volume we are closing now.

IV

Our general answer, then, to the question whether our gospel for the non-Christian world is modified by twentieth-century thought, is that the Time-spirit itself has driven Christendom back upon the shortest and oldest of its Creeds, the only one in use within the Apostolic Age. 'Jesus is the Christ,' understood as the apostles understood it, sums up the doctrine which all the Churches can agree to place in unchallengeable primacy as the message they must bring to the world. Teaching men this personal loyalty to a Living Saviour, known to us in His present significance by our records of what He was in His human life, and the experience of age after age that tells what He has been to His servants ever since He vanished from men's sight, we shall show them 'how to observe all that He commanded us.' This supreme task achieved, we can afford to leave the Church in each mission-field to organize itself according to its native temperament. That is what the Church in the West has done. It is a commonplace of history that 'the ghost of old Rome sits on the ruins thereof'—that the Vatican lies very near the Palatine Hill. It is hardly less obvious that modern British forms of Church organization—Presbyterian or Independent—arose naturally from the

genius of a race not tolerant of autocracy, but keenly alive to the advantages of order and discipline in alliance with freedom. What organization will best suit the needs of the Church in India, China, or Africa may be safely left to its members when they are strong enough for self-government. British Methodism, at any rate, which under Wesley's own rule so readily left her American daughter to develop her own constitution, will not be found hesitating when the day comes that marks the new and welcome era in the history of the Church in a land conquered for Christ.

More directly in the line of my subject is the question whether Christianity in these various new provinces of its empire will be found in any way coloured by the survival of elements from the religions that preceded it. If the evangelization of the world were left in Roman hands, the affirmative answer would be emphatic. The stress laid by Rome on the virtue of external rites has in all her history led to practical syncretism. Old gods and old rites have been furnished officially with new labels. In many cases, however, the people themselves have clung to the old interpretation.[1] Often, of course, no great harm is done. To take a haphazard illustration, the Russian blessing of the waters at Epiphany 'in commemoration of Christ's baptism' is fairly harmless in itself with this ingenious orthodox explanation of an age-long and world-wide custom;[2] nor is there much mischief done if the old idea of

[1] On all this see above, pp. 85 ff.

[2] Dr. Rendel Harris believes it is to be traced at Jerusalem in the popular notion of a New Year angel visit to the waters of Bethesda, implied perhaps in John v. 7.

the 'luck of the water' at New Year clings to the minds of simple and superstitious people. Even so, however, we can never be quite sure when a seemingly harmless superstition may not prove very mischievous. Applying these considerations to the policy of Rome in adapting native ideas wherever possible to Christian interpretations, we can easily see how often it may result in leaving the people to their old polytheism, with very little change in the real thought that lies below the forms and names employed. And to procure a real and permanent uplift in the character of a degraded people, there is an obvious need of a total change in their outlook. Animists, accustomed to perpetual fear as they move about in a world swarming with dangerous spirits, will not be truly emancipated by labelling these spirits angels or demons, teaching exorcisms that use the name of the Trinity, and then going on as before. They only conceive Christ as the sons of Sceva did: the new magic in His name is more potent than the old, but of exactly the same order. Surely a complete break with the past is the only way of liberating such poor thralls! The missionary treats these fears as a mother treats those of her little child when found crying in bed in terror at weird sounds or ghostly shadows in the darkened room. To laugh at the fears as silly will not dissipate them in the case of a highly-strung and timid child. Her own presence is the first and most effective exorcism, however desirable it is to use other methods to develop the sense of security in the future. So the messenger of Christ must portray the Living Master, all-powerful and all-loving, whose perpetual nearness makes it a matter of sheer indifference whether

there are or are not 'legions of wily fiends' around the object of victorious Love. The teacher wins his whole aim when he has opened the ears of his poor, frightened children to hear the voice that whispers 'It is I: be not afraid.'

A few sample problems might be briefly named in which missionary statesmanship has to decide where adaptations of ancient habits of thought and practice can be safely and wisely adapted to Christian use. We might take next one lying not far away in essence from the animism just referred to. Ancestor-worship in China is a tremendous problem for the missionary. The Edinburgh Report says (p. 47):

> While all agree that ancestor-worship as now practised in China cannot be performed by Christians, some of the writers moot the question whether a modified worship, in the form, say, of a memorial service, would not be possible among Christians in China. Its entire neglect is a grievous hindrance to the spread of the Christian faith. One writer says: 'Were we to compromise in regard to ancestor-worship, much of the opposition to our propagandism would disappear.'

It is noted that this deeply-rooted belief makes filial affection a heavy weight in the scale against Christian discipleship. Parents are convinced that if their children do not pay them their due of worship they will themselves be 'beggars in the nether world,' and the children are held back from Christianity by an instinct arising from a duty we hold as sacred as they do. The Roman Catholic has a resource ready to hand, from the use of which we are, of course, debarred. All Souls' Day is an ancient accommodation to ancestor-worship, and the priest

may simply transfer to this commemoration nearly everything that his Chinese convert has hitherto practised. I need hardly stay to show how extremely dangerous this concession has proved in Europe. It is emphasized by the curious duplication of the festival. All Saints' Day took the elements capable of being entirely 'baptized into Christ'—one repeats instinctively Lowell's exquisite lines:

> One day, of holy days the crest,
> I, though no Churchman, love to keep,
> All Saints—the unknown good that rest
> In God's still memory folded deep.

All Souls' Day was added to be the dumping-ground of ideas which truer Christian instinct rejected.[1]

What, then, can Protestant missionaries do, who are eager to conserve the filial piety which is woven into the fabric of Chinese ancestor-worship, but dare not compromise in any way the 'aloneness' of God? Are there resources upon which they can draw within the New Testament doctrine of God and man? Clearly the 'modified worship' just mentioned requires from our point of view a great deal of emphasis on the epithet! A 'memorial service' we should naturally suppose to be incapable of the idea of 'worship,' however 'modified,' if directed towards the dead, instead of Him in whom they rest.

It seems almost an impertinence even to discuss, from one's study chair in England, what our

[1] On the relation between these two celebrations see J. G. Frazer, *Adonis Attis Osiris*[2], 317 f. (=*The Golden Bough*[3], Part IV.). The preceding pages exhibit the essentially heathen character of All Souls.

missionary brethren may legitimately do to meet this very grave problem. Were I to suggest anything, it would be with an assurance that if my suggested line is right, it is safe to have been anticipated; and if it is avoided, it fails to meet the need. There is, of course, in our Faith a great wealth of teaching about the indestructibility of goodness. The commemoration of this great fact, and of the blessed life so certainly enjoyed by 'heathens' who did deeds of self-sacrificing love to the least of Christ's 'brethren,' will furnish a subject abundantly sufficient for the solemn memorial service suggested. And such services are indeed held as it is. The Rev. C. A. Gaff tells me that Christians in South China assemble for singing and prayer in their own burial-ground at the time of the annual festival of the dead, when their heathen neighbours are burning incense at their family tombs. The institution is indeed one that may bring great comfort to sorrowful hearts, as I can testify from experience in my own neighbourhood at home, where there is a service of this kind which I was recently privileged to conduct.

The real difficulty arises when we come to the case of those whose parents have lived openly evil lives. Can we bid the convert tell them, if living, or comfort his hopeless sorrow for them if dead by telling himself, that he will pray continually for them, wherever they may be, to a God who will take account of any good there was in them, and may in His own way—who knows?—make use of a yearning human love that pursues a sinner even into the Unseen? I doubt if the sternest Protestant would forbid as sinful a prayer for the dead in such a

sense as this. Dr. R. F. Horton himself, commenting on the one New Testament text that seems to look this way,[1] allows that 'there may be nothing to hinder the sorrowing soul from breathing out its prayers for the departed into the Father's ear.' But if on grounds so free from superstition as these we were to encourage Chinese Christians in offering prayers *for* their dead, and so meeting the national sentiment that prompts worship offered *to* them, what would the probable consequences be? The history of the Christian Church has proved the peril of prayers for the dead when they are systematized as an institution. The peril is set forth in strong language, but not too strong, by Dr. Horton in the note referred to, and it constitutes a weightier argument against the practice than the rather fine distinctions on which he seems mainly to rely. In a country like China the danger of such consequences would be peculiarly serious. Even the memorial service, unless the purity of Christian faith is jealously guarded, might degenerate by imperceptible stages into something indistinguishable from the ancestor-worship it was meant to supersede. The risk may have to be run, and only the men on the spot can judge whether it is worth running. They may well decide, in answer to the suggestion of a 'modified worship' which some of themselves have put forth, that for the wellbeing of the Church in China, visible before their eye of faith in its future strength, it is safest only to 'preach Jesus and the

[1] *Century Bible*: Pastoral Epistles, p. 148, on 2 Tim. i. 18. I confess I do not quite see the 'difference between an optative and a request,' between the 'wish' and the 'prayer' that Onesiphorus (assumed 'with some probability' to be dead) may 'find mercy of the Lord in that day.'

Resurrection,' and comfort bereaved souls with words like those Paul sent to Thessalonica long ago.

It is interesting to put by the side of this Chinese problem the closely related problem of missionaries in Japan. The same Report (p. 102) is found to claim as 'a valuable national asset' the 'easily Christianized' element in Japanese religion which to the outsider might seem to be practically identical with Chinese ancestor-worship. The Japanese keep the annual All Souls' festival, like the Parsis, the ancient Greeks, the Romans, and many another people, at which the departed are believed to return for three days to their old homes, where offerings are made and a feast prepared. Ancestral tablets in every house are connected with special prayers, which Shinto priests offer *to* the dead and Buddhists *for* them. Yet the Japanese section of the Commission conclude that

> It is certainly possible to imagine a transformation of this [reverence paid to ancestors and departed heroes] into the Christian idea of the great Communion of Saints, which binds the seen and the unseen in one vast fellowship.

A subtle but real difference between the Japanese and Chinese attitude towards these ancestor spirits may perhaps account for the greater readiness of Christian teachers in Japan to adapt the native religion in this particular. I, of course, do not venture an opinion, mentioning the difference only to be a reminder of the risks of theorizing at a distance.

To discuss a tithe of the problems which arise

in the mission-field in connexion with the possibility and the wisdom of 'baptizing' elements of native religions would go far beyond the purpose of this book, even if my own lack of personal experience did not disqualify me from undertaking it. I take up one other problem, with the same purpose as the last, as an illustration of a general principle drawn from a very different field. In many countries Christianity finds religions which in various forms put forth the precepts 'Handle not, nor touch, nor taste.' To what extent, if at all, can Christianity go to meet these tabus halfway? Or, to put it as Church historians, we ask how far may Christianity make terms with asceticism? In some applications of the question there is little difficulty. A well-known missionary writes (Report, p. 150):

> I have found after long intercourse with Moslems that their idea of our ceremonial uncleanness is on the part of many a real hindrance to their acceptance of our doctrine. I would go a long way in meeting Mohammedan prejudices, for instance, in abstaining absolutely from wine and swine's flesh, as well as in matters of dress and ablution, to win my Moslem brothers.

So again (p. 163) we find Indian missionaries earnestly pleading for a general abstinence from beef, the eating of which produces such horror among the people. Such abstinences, of course, are wholly on the lines of Paul's example. The immense majority of Methodist ministers and members in our own country abstain from alcohol for this very reason, and would cheerfully give up bacon and add a few extra washings if there were

such a motive to prompt them. This is not asceticism, for the central principle of it is altruistic. Nothing that enters the mouth can defile the man, and a Christian is wholly free. But he counts it a privilege not to use his freedom to the full, if by these means he may ' gain some.'

The problem of asceticism is, of course, acutest in India, where many devoted missionaries have denied themselves absolute necessaries of life, in the hope of thus winning their way to the Hindu mind. One noble man has recently, by example more than precept, founded a brotherhood which by the extremes of its assimilation to native life, and by the rigorous privations endured in the effort to get near to the people, seems almost to rival the faqirs. We cannot help admiring devotion so unsparing, recalling the spirit of Francis himself. But on the whole I do not think I could encourage a young missionary to yield to the impulse that might bid him follow these beautiful lives in the outward features of their service. I would not question the call of the Brothers themselves. Their revealed duty may well be as rare as the physical constitution that can stand such conditions in India ; and if it means the early sacrifice of precious lives that might have borne fruit through many years, we must leave that with Him who gave the call, and knows best how and where to use servants utterly given up to His obedience. But, as Brother Stokes himself admits, I believe, the Church cannot venture to encourage what must be left absolutely to the individual and his Master's Spirit in him. The Church can only feel that her missionaries' lives are precious to the cause of the Kingdom, and

must be conserved in every possible way. A European in India denying himself meat or little 'luxuries' may be endangering his health as much as a native faqir practising austerities of a kind no Englishman would or could possibly attempt. The whole-hearted missionary must often chafe at the necessity of indulging himself, as the hostile native may count it; he would find it positively easier to live with his people and eat as they do. But if the evangelization of a wide district depends on his maintaining his strength unimpaired, the game of tennis and European food may be set with the missionary's private prayer as direct agencies in the accomplishment of the spread of the Gospel.

I had written the preceding paragraphs and those that follow on the same subject, when there arrived the Rev. Benjamin Robinson's little book, *In the Brahmans' Holy Land*, secure of its welcome as a gift from the author. I read it through immediately, and am tempted beyond measure to dwell on its unconscious self-revelation of a man of most unusual power of mind, and devotion that shrank from nothing, employed with singular success on the problem of finding a way into the Hindu's inmost mind to enshrine the Lord Christ there. Mr. Robinson has at last been induced to tell of the experiment he made, which, as Dr. Haigh shows in the Foreword, robbed the W.M.M.S. after only seven years' service of a missionary uniquely equipped with an understanding of the language, literature, and thought of the people.[1] He felt himself called to live as the natives lived, that he might

[1] The book was written, alas! only just in time. Since I wrote these words the news has come of his departure.

remove the barrier which separated him from those he came to save. He made a long tour, travelling barefoot and in native dress, and having—so he thought—trained himself by gradual reduction of flesh diet to abstain altogether from that which Hindus shuddered at as inexpiable sin. And the sorrowful result was seen when he was carried on board ship for home, having kept up many of these abstinences to the end, destined for the rest of his life to yearn through long hours of pain for the people he came to understand so well at such a cost. For alas! the lesson of that first and most extreme form of the experiment was only that caste is *jāti*, 'birth,' and between Englishman and Hindu there is a great gulf fixed which even love and sacrifice cannot bridge. The sacrifice was not vain—no sacrifice of love can be. It helped the missionary to see into those heathen hearts, and even across the great gulf to flash the light of Christ into them. But in its eager purpose that the messenger might become an Indian to the Indians it failed entirely. Does the story help us to understand why the Son of God must be *born* Man if He would speak to us wholly as one of ourselves?

There is another consideration, which is indeed the formal reason for discussing this subject at all. What of the danger lest the Hindu should mistake the essential character of Christianity, and see in it a religion willing to admit affinity with Hinduism itself in value set upon austerity? It would be an absurd misunderstanding, of course—as absurd as the popular conviction of which Mr. Findlay tells me, that the missionary 'ascetic' must be expiating some deadly sin! But in this matter we

cannot afford to risk misunderstanding. Sooner or later the natural bent of the people would probably make austerity and the accumulation of merit thereby a tenet of Christian doctrine. Now there have been periods when the exaggerated protest of asceticism may have been providentially used for the cleansing of a sensual world. But nothing could be clearer than the doctrine of Jesus Himself and His disciples on this question. He recognized that His followers would sometimes fast, as He had done in the wilderness, when intense absorption made them indifferent to the claims of the body. He ordained that all such fasting should be spontaneous and free from display; but He never prescribed the practice in any way,[1] and as far as we know never observed it Himself. He 'came eating and drinking,' in conspicuous and intentional contrast to the ascetic John. In His own presence His disciples 'cannot fast,' He said; and on that condition they never had a call to the act of severity and gloom except on that terrible Sabbath when His body lay in Joseph's tomb. The joyous conception of life as the gift of God, the refusal to reject any creature of the Father if sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, were the outward and visible sign of a religion of emancipation, proclaiming everywhere the glad-hearted message that men may even eat and drink 'to the glory of God.'

Then came the Gnostics, and a tide of reaction set in which was long in ebbing. They commanded to abstain from sundry foods, and they forbade marriage as impure. Paul, who spoke so sternly about their

[1] That was left to later interpolators of the Gospel text, as in Mark ix. 29.

tenets, had himself forgone the joys of home life for the sake of his work.

> Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
> Yes, without stay of father or of son,
> Lone on the land and homeless on the water,
> Pass I in patience till the work be done.

But other apostles had not this necessity laid on them, and took about with them a Christian wife. Both types are represented in our modern Missions. The fragrant memory of David Hill keeps ever with us one who in this as in so many other respects trod in the steps of Paul. To more of the brethren has been given the privilege of showing the people among whom they labour the Christian home, which by its beauty and peace ranks among the first of attractions towards the faith that makes it possible. Here, then, as well as on the other side of the question, our answer can hardly be doubtful when we are asked whether our religion is to yield its freedom and naturalness in order to conciliate prejudices the removal of which is one of the great tasks of the gospel. It is right to give up indifferent things, provided that their abandonment does not risk the health by which the work is to be done. Only very exceptional circumstances can justify concessions which may obscure the very nature of Christianity.

V

We face the new century with a missionary motive deeper, clearer, more compelling than ever—with a gospel the light of which is gathered

into a focus of dazzling brilliance, so that the half-lights surrounding it are hardly seen. Spiritually, the men and women whom we shall send forth in the new age will stand just where their forerunners stood. Personal devotion to the world's Saviour is a gift without which no one is likely to go out as a missionary, and when that gift is really given the results of it are the same in one age as in another. Intellectually, and materially, the modern missionary has an immense advantage. His mind may enter on a heritage won for him by a century more richly laden with increased knowledge than any in history. Experience for which men had to pay with their health or their very lives is ready for him before he leaves home. Problems over which the noblest once blundered wofully are solved for him. Fuller knowledge of the language he is to use has been acquired. The Bible is there for him, with the pioneer translators' work already brought on its way towards perfection. Modes of travel unknown to the early missionaries reduce to a minimum the time wasted in getting to his work. The march of medical and surgical discovery has reduced for him the risks of tropical climate. In all these ways the missionary of 1913, given equal zeal and equal talents, may achieve incomparably more under similar conditions than the heroes of 1813.

Let us try to survey the field for which the home Church has to find labourers. A bird's-eye view is all we can attempt : to look at details would only obscure the picture which is to bring home to us our duty. Books like the Edinburgh Report, in its first section on ' Carrying the Gospel,' or Dr.

J. R. Mott's *Decisive Hour of Christian Missions*, brought up to date by Mr. J. H. Oldham's comprehensive survey of 1912 in the January issue of the *International Review of Missions* for the new year, will help an earnest student to make a beginning.

Following the sun round the world, we look first at Japan. Methodism is taking its share in the evangelization of this country—one of immense importance to the future of the world—in the labours of our American brethren. 'The effective evangelization of Japan has not been more than begun,' says Mr. Oldham, who quotes the fact that of towns with 5,000 inhabitants not one in seven has a Protestant missionary, while one more may have Japanese workers. And this is in a country where the mass of the population live in small villages. What can wise secular observers be thinking of the destiny of a people so gifted, who are learning the hard materialism of the West, and its fertile inventiveness in destructive agencies, without those humanizing influences which have softened the savagery lying so near the surface of all our boasted civilization? Our own colonies on the other side of the world have taken fright at the possibilities of Japanese invasion, and are enforcing conscription with the ruthless tyranny which militarism ever employs. They would consult their safety better by training Christian missionaries!

Passing by Korea, the land where lost political independence is being so wonderfully compensated by spiritual emancipation, we come to China, where the direct work of the W.M.M.S. begins. What God has done in sixty years through our

Church may be seen skilfully summarized in one chapter of Dr. and Miss Findlay's masterly little book, *Wesley's World Parish*. It will show us vividly how much we must do if we are to be worthy of our past. How much is yet to be done if this largest unit of the world's populations is to be written among the Christian lands may be seen from the Edinburgh Report.[1] There is one province which has over five hundred missionaries, with nearly thirty thousand people to each one of them. At the other end of the scale is a province with twenty-three missionaries, each charged with a third of a million souls. Tibet, with six and a half millions, has no Missions at all. On the estimates available—and the Commission thinks they are probably under the truth—

> The Church has in four sparsely settled provinces a field as large almost as Burma and Bengal combined, with a population equalling that of the Turkish Empire[2] plus Ceylon, without any regular preaching of the gospel.

Since the Edinburgh Conference history has been made in China. An almost bloodless revolution, in which a Chinese Christian took a leading part, has destroyed a monarchy of immemorial antiquity and started China on a new path, the issues of which are incalculable. What I am writing now, before the first anniversary of the Republic, may be wholly out of date when this book is published. Meanwhile, from a bewildering mass of data, imperfectly known, we gather the clear impression that at any rate the opportunity is unparalleled in all the history

[1] Commission I., p. 92. [2] Of course before the war.

of Missions. And in face of it the directors of a great Missionary Society have to confess[1]

> It seems impossible to arouse any special interest in the great opportunity, or to call forth any generous enthusiasm in regard to it.

Meanwhile, with the Church only half awake to the chance of centuries, the great world powers, nominally Christian, are pursuing their old selfish policy towards the young State with its boundless possibilities, and making an anti-foreign outburst natural, and almost excusable, were it not that the brunt of it falls on the only foreigners who have gone to China for China's good and not their own. Worst of all, the long black record of England's shame in her exploitation of China's vice culminates in the continued export of a thousand chests of opium per week, dumped in Shanghai with threats of what will happen if these prohibited articles are not paid for. In this way our great name protects villains who would consign millions of human beings to perdition for their own gain. Oh for the sound of the 'dread voice' which Milton recalled, to rouse again the slumbering conscience of England! Fresh from the teaching of Jesus, an apostle could scathe hardened avarice into half-repentance with the words, 'Thy silver perish with thee!' Has Peter no successors now?

What I wrote above, in anticipation of the possible antiquating of my words before they reached the reader's eye, has been fulfilled in so startling a manner that I leave the last paragraph

[1] L.M.S. Report. I quote from Mr. Oldham's editorial referred to above, p. 16 from the *Review* for January.

untouched, unspeakably thankful that I can add in the proof stage a new one recording the wonderful works of God. First came the event of April 27, when at the earnest request of the Chinese Government all Christendom united in prayer for the new Republic in its hour of need. I cannot stay to draw the contrast between the new and the old, or press home the urgency of the call that comes to the Christian world from a China so pathetically eager for the prayers of those whom but lately it counted as very fiends. It was a fitting sequel to that day of prayer when almost immediately afterwards a British Minister could announce in the House of Commons that our opium trade with China was dead. We cannot wipe out the shame of memory, but our future at least is to be pure from stain. And to-day we may hear the voice of the Master proclaiming a new Beatitude on His faithful followers who through long years have pleaded and striven in His name that this crown of infamy should be taken away. The Emancipators of 1838, and the crusaders against legalised vice, the Congo Reformers and the Anti-opium agitators—these are the men and women of whom England may boast, and Christianity point to them as her apologia to-day!

Burma, Ceylon, and India meet us next as we travel west, passing by smaller fields in which our own Society is not working. The change is comforting to a Briton who loves his country, and believes in her claim to be regarded as a great benefactor of mankind. The justice of that claim is the sole plea we can urge for the continued existence of our Empire, and the only power by which

we shall keep it. In China, alas! our past record in secular relations has been almost irredeemably bad: the stain of Mammon's finger has been over them all. But in India there is a very different story to tell. Our administration of a vast responsibility has been increasingly disinterested as the years have passed. We can feel nothing but pride as we watch the triumph of our Indian Government over unrest and disloyalty, very easily explained, and conquered by methods which made the Hindu mind realize at the Delhi Durbar the results of the fact that our Throne is Christian. We have saved untold millions from perishing by war and by famine. We have given them justice between man and man. We have laid the foundations of a vast system of education, and are even now building solidly thereon. We are training them gradually for an extension of that share in self-government which is the ultimate and rightful ambition of every lover of his country. What other nation has done such things for subject races which have come under the white man's rule? And what deeper cause is there than the fact that the principles of the New Testament have moulded our public conscience to a greater extent than in any other land in history?

The situation in India is described by Mr. Oldham as 'on the whole encouraging' to the friends of Christian Missions. The census results of 1911 show that about eleven out of every thousand souls in British India and Burma are Christian, nearly five of them being Protestant; and that 'in the last twenty years the increase of the Christian population has been 69.9 per cent., as against 4.6

per cent. among Hindus, and 16.3 per cent. among Mohammedans.' The growth 'is the result of mass movements towards Christianity among the depressed classes.' The Edinburgh Report[1] calls attention to the steady and rapid growth of the Christian community, which through the past half-century has been enlarged by fifty per cent. at the end of every decade. There is evidence also that intensively as well as numerically the Church has been developing to a very marked extent.

But side by side with this there is the uniform story of the undermanned condition of Missions everywhere. The areas absolutely deserted may not be as conspicuous as in China; but when the Decennial Conference is found urging 'that on the lowest computation of the requirements of India the staff of missionaries should be increased *fourfold*,'[2] we can realize how far we are from making an adequate effort to use the magnificent opportunity which India gives us to-day.

Before leaving India I would recall the immensely important fact that there is missionary work to be done here in England by those who seek to lead India to Christ. In our British Universities there are very large numbers of Indian students. For instance, there are thirty-eight at present in Manchester; and the numbers at Cambridge have involved the College authorities in serious practical difficulties. These men will, of course, have influence in India out of all proportion to their numbers. If

[1] Commission I., p. 163.

[2] Commission I., p. 158. This was in 1902, but I am afraid the requirement is not yet met!

Christianized here, they will be missionaries of the highest value, whether devoted to that calling or occupying a lay position in the Church. But if not —if led by social prejudice that keeps them at arm's length to form a hatred towards our country and its professed religion, what a peril will they become to the British position in India! There have been cases known where Indian parents whose sons were coming under missionary influence sent them to study in England! And alas! we know too well that such a method of keeping them from Christian influence is terribly effective. The subject —which to a less extent affects other Orientals studying in England—is being carefully watched by missionary organizations, and especially by the Student Christian Movement, which can probably do more than any others. The work bristles with difficulties, but its urgency is unmistakable from every point of view. Even the merest secularist may well acknowledge how important it is that these hundreds of Indian students should get a favourable impression of the imperial country to which his own is bound. What, then, should be the feeling of the Christian?

Following the sun to the next great mission-field, we try to sum up very briefly the position in Africa. The name of the Dark Continent recalls to us this year more than ever the name of that supremely great missionary which is written indelibly across the map of Africa. The secular world was slow enough to recognize David Livingstone in his lifetime; but it is suggestive to notice how ready it is to-day to acknowledge the fact that the messenger of Christianity—in this respect not so far beyond many of

his less known brethren—was a pioneer of civilization. Whether the 'civilization' that so readily appropriates the fruits of the missionary's self-sacrifice has been more of a blessing than a curse, may well be doubted. Certain it is that the only parts of Africa where the advent of the white man has brought unmixed blessing are those in which the missionary has been left alone. Livingstone's successors have made some parts of Africa stand out among the most conspicuous triumphs of Christianity to be found in the whole world. And alas! by way of foil, we remember that among their achievements has been to drag into the light of day unutterable infamies perpetrated by white men and a 'civilized' Government in the pursuit of filthy gain. One of the gravest facts of the missionary situation meets us vividly as we fix our eyes on Africa—the advance of Islam, and the failure of the Church to get to grips with the only non-Christian religion which has any great proselytizing activity. It is notorious that the animistic negroes in Africa are accessible to Christianity now, but will be exceedingly hard to win when Islam has laid hold of their allegiance. And this is going on under our eyes, while we know it, and know so well what Islam means for the races it subdues. We may say this without lack of sympathy for its better side, excellently presented in the striking article I was quoting in the previous chapter (p. 100). We were most of us full of hope and sympathy for the Turk when he threw off the yoke of the detestable Abdul Hamid, and launched on what we thought was going to be a new life. But alas! the new has been all too continuous with the old,

and all Europe sees that we can no longer trust the Moslem to rule over professing Christians—except, of course, in Armenia and Asia Minor, which are not Europe's concern! Beyond everything we know what Islam does for womanhood. If Islam be acknowledged to mark an advance on the low animistic religions that fall so easily before it, it would at the most charitable estimate be only a case of the good being the enemy of the better. The wonderful results of the triumph of the Cross in Uganda—the brightest gem in the crown of the Church Missionary Society—show what Christianity can do in the moral and material uplifting of a primitive race, the thrall of a religion that held them down at the lowest level in the bonds of pervasive fear. What has been done in Uganda could be repeated in every part of Africa in as brief a period as the third of a century which has transformed that country—if only the eyes of the Christian world were open!

I am only taking a glance at each continent as it comes to meet the sun, so as to get from each a hint as to conditions in our world-problem which we must try to include in our general survey. I cross the Atlantic, then, to another Dark Continent, as it may be truly called for another reason. South America is perhaps less touched by Christian Missions than any other part of the world. It was in that great continent that the work was done which made Charles Darwin acknowledge the wonder-working power of Christianity as a civilizing agency in places he had thought to be utterly hopeless. His lifelong subscription to that Society must surely stand among the most convincing

testimonies the cause of Missions can plead. But as a whole we are doing very little, and that because the continent belongs to white men claimed by a Christian Church. Edinburgh left untouched the problem of which this is a conspicuous illustration—very properly, for the work of carrying the Gospel to the heathen was big enough to claim her whole attention. But Rome has allowed the fire of religion to go out altogether in so many of the Latin races that we can only feel the deepest concern for countries where she is the sole witness for Christianity. Our own Missions in France, Spain, and Italy are enough to show us that countries nominally Christian may know as little of Christ as those which are avowedly heathen. And one result is—Putumayo!

From the Western Hemisphere there are very many subjects that tempt us to continue our survey. One is loth to pass by the splendid results of the Gospel among the Indians of Canada and the Eskimos of the Far North. The South Seas cannot be forgotten when a Methodist thinks of Missions. There our pioneer missionaries faced and tamed the cannibals of Fiji, as in our own generation their true successor, George Brown, has done in other savage regions—witnesses of a power still active in the world which no culture or science can rival. But the time would fail me were I but to name the fields of the West where the light of Christ has shone to men in darkness. One region only I must further name, partly because I can here speak of what I have seen, but mainly as it contributes elements to our survey which so far have not been brought in.

The story of the first beginnings of Methodist Missions among the West Indian negroes takes us back to the very birth of the great world-work we celebrate to-day. We were privileged to take a leading share in telling the unhappy slaves the good news that in Christ there is neither bond nor free. And so when at last the devoted labour of Christian saints in the mother country had brought Great Britain to the most glorious deed in the annals of her Empire, the emancipation of the slaves, there was a negro population prepared by the Gospel for the use of freedom. The history of three-quarters of a century illustrates the fact that the task of Christian Missions is not complete when alien religions have been expelled, and a people has for two or three generations borne the Christian name. With the less advanced races manhood comes but slowly; and if the negro is to reach a maturity in which he can stand alone, his vigorous youth must still be lovingly watched over by white men who for Christ's sake are not ashamed to call him brother. Two generations of freedom instead of one, with the contrast between British treatment of the negro and that meted out to him by the whites of the Southern States, account for the fact that we have no 'black peril' in the West Indies. It shows how far the race has advanced under sympathetic guidance and a freedom that is generous and real. We have not yet finished our work. One who has seen, even in a brief visit, the conditions of the West Indian work will no longer be impatient for the withdrawal of British missionaries to fields where there are heathen to evangelize; nor will he consciously or unconsciously

cherish the notion that for this kind of work inferior men will do. We are slowly training for their destiny a race obviously destined by Nature to dominate the torrid zone where other men cannot thrive. And if the work is done with enlightenment and fervour worthy of the history unrolled in the annals of this centenary, what a magnificent reaction may there be in Africa and all round the world!

One other class of question is started by the memory of an evening in Georgetown, Demerara, and a drive of seven or eight miles through the village settlements the next day. There was a congregation of East Indians from Bengal, to whom the English visitor had the privilege of preaching Christ, with his words interpreted into Hindi by one of the two or three missionaries who have to permeate that great and growing Hindu community. Half the population of British Guiana is now non-Christian, immigrant from the East. And this is the case in other Western regions, where the stronger brown race is supplanting the black, and bringing with it a serious peril to the Christianity established there. But if there is a peril, there is also a great opportunity. We can evangelize India through coolies doing their terms of service in the West Indies or the South Seas, as we saw just now we might be doing through Indian students in British Universities. One more 'great door and effectual'—are we alert enough to enter?

So we come at the end of our survey to that darkest realm of all, described by the Edinburgh Commission as 'Unoccupied Sections of the World.' It calls up before my mind what I think will always be the most vivid of my Edinburgh memories. It was

a prayer by Dr. Karl Kumm, of which the elements were largely names of regions unknown to us, but graven on the pleader's heart. I seem to hear that grim monotonous refrain, and the tones of awe and yearning in which it recurred—'X, a country as large as England, without a missionary; Y, a country as large as France, without a missionary; Z, a country as large as Prussia, without a missionary'; and so on, all of the names from one quarter of the globe. No one will wonder that the most living memory of Edinburgh should be one of a prayer!

VI

We are called by all these considerations to an uplift of spirit and an outburst of zeal such as the Christian Church has never known since the Apostolic Age. Before we turn to the examination of our preparedness for an enterprise so unparalleled, we may remind ourselves of the need of statesmanlike wisdom as well as zeal for the facing of the problem. If by a great inspiration the Church suddenly roused herself to the full extent of her call, and men and money enough came for the occupation of all these neglected or undermanned stations, we should be in danger of throwing away our advantage if we did not call our very best brains to a united and very prayerful planning of the work. The British Empire was founded, said Seeley, in a fit of absence of mind. The precedent is not likely to avail for the establishment of that Empire of which we are now thinking. Not so, at any rate, was the Empire founded in the days of the apostles.

It will be worth our while to look at the strategy which won the first great battle of the Faith. We read the Acts and the life and letters of Paul very superficially if we think that the great missionary's work was directed by blind chance. It was a brilliant and far-seeing policy that achieved its triumph in the capture of the best-placed fortresses all over the Roman Empire before the enemy was awake. Along the great Roman roads, through the great Roman centres of government, Paul travelled with his gospel; and he took full advantage of the protection that his Roman citizenship gave him. Everything that he did was controlled by the instinct that he must do the maximum of effective work in the minimum of time. He was not weighing one community against another, as if God counted some souls more precious than others. But he meant to win for Christ men who by character, gifts, and opportunities would be most effective propagandists. People of small towns, off the beaten track, belonging to races of inferior culture, would themselves be evangelized most surely if the preachers went first to those who took a larger part in the world's life. For this reason, of course, Paul was eager to get to Rome. Time after time the way was closed to him. At last he seized the opportunity of his trial. His father's death (it would seem) had brought him the needed money, and he could therefore prosecute an appeal in Rome. It was obviously unnecessary, as the provincial authorities themselves declared, but it secured what Paul valued far more than liberty.

But over all this shrewd missionary policy, this masterful scheming of a brain the like of which

history has rarely if ever known, there was the overshadowing cloud of a great obedience. For Paul the reasoning of his own powerful mind was only one among many channels through which the Higher Will was revealed to him. A physical prostration drove him into, or detained him in, the regions of Galatia, a country by no means marked out for him by his line of policy. He followed the Guiding Hand, and founded the Church there. The Epistle to the Galatians justifies that providence to this day. No more telling illustration of Paul's methods can be found than in those vivid verses of narrative where his biographer describes Paul's advance into new territory after revisiting Derbe and Lystra. The Roman province of Asia was before him, with its thriving commercial towns and teeming population, doubtless the objective of the apostle's missionary ambition from the very beginning of his journey. But before they left the 'Phrygo-Galatic Region,' an 'intimation' had come—in what guise we are not told—and the travellers passed by Asia: its time was coming soon. One other promising field was open, and they confidently turned northwards to the great province of Bithynia. A stronger intimation still—was it an actual vision of Jesus that accounts for the unique phrase (Acts xvi. 7)?—forbad them this field also: its time was coming (1 Peter i. 1). Onward, like Israel to the Red Sea, the perplexed but obedient missionaries travelled, to the place where in the dawn of history Europe and Asia met in arms. The name of Troas was destined to mean more for the world than that of Troy. There Paul saw a Philippian doctor, a Gentile proselyte, destined

to be one of his dearest and most trusted friends. In a dream Paul heard Luke pleading with him to cross into Macedonia and help his countrymen. Eagerly in their morning talk over the vision Luke reiterated the plea; and the whole company took it as a message sent from heaven, their reason accepting with full conviction the new and startling direction to which a whole series of perplexing hindrances had brought them. So Paul came to Europe, and the whole history of the world was changed.

I have dwelt on the details of this story—without, of course, stopping to justify the reading of its disputed points—because it seems to me full of priceless instruction for our missionary statesmanship to-day. We must follow Paul's intellectual grip of the facts, and think in continents like him. But we must be always open to vision, which many a time may lead us where unaided reason would not point. Sometimes the interests of the Kingdom may bid us preach in Lystra, and let Ephesus wait. 'We shall not full direction need,' if, like Paul, we use all the powers God has given the Church, and wait for the Guiding Hand.

VII

Our survey of the field is enough to show that the present efforts of all the Churches will need to be, on the lowest estimate, trebled, if the opportunity of really evangelizing the world is to be seriously accepted. The existing staff of the Missionary Societies cannot cope with more than a fraction of the work for which they are nominally responsible;

and vast territories remain absolutely unexplored by the gospel messengers. Dr. Mott told us at Edinburgh that properly arranged co-operation between existing Protestant agencies would double the effectiveness of the forces now on the field. Assuming this estimate—and no man's knowledge goes further than Dr. Mott's—we may well feel that on the foreign field 'our unhappy divisions' have been causing a waste of labour and resources nothing less than scandalous. There are many facts which make the statement at first sight surprising. We know from missionary testimony how real is the brotherly co-operation upon the field to-day. Societies apportion spheres to a large extent so as to avoid overlapping; and in the comparatively few places where this has failed, the overmanning bears no relation to the waste caused by similar behaviour at home. The realities of the conflict with heathenism naturally force Christian men to recognize the futility and wickedness of refusal to help other Christians, at least by apportioning 'spheres of influence,' when the alternative is failure to get any form of Christianity preached at all. Of course, there are a few deplorable exceptions. We meet at home Christian ministers who will not support the Bible Society, because it involves working with men whose views on the organization of the Church are incorrect. Sometimes this curious phenomenon may be seen abroad. I found in a part of the West Indian field where a large immigrant heathen population from Bengal still awaits effective evangelization on an adequate scale, that the common-sense plan of apportioning these scattered settlements among the Christian

Churches at work in the colony was doomed to remain untried because of this obstacle. It is hard to be patient with these purely stupid bigots, who must be repudiated almost as heartily by the 'Catholic' enthusiasts we heard at Edinburgh as by ourselves. But the deepening of spiritual life within all sections of the Church of Christ will do away with these as with all other obstacles that the failure of His servants puts in the way of His triumphal progress; and we must be content to wait and pray.

If the obvious evils of quasi-competitive Missions are less grave than Dr. Mott's statement implies, we can soon see where a really thorough inter-denominational federation would work an immense improvement. A united board, like the Edinburgh Continuation Committee, could see as no society's executive can possibly see where it will pay best to plant our workers, and how we may best distribute the resources at our command. Missionary statesmanship would have an opportunity such as is sadly wanting under present conditions. There is a very natural tendency to fall into grooves, as sorely-tried officers go through the sickening toil of guarding expenditure with income always short of the ordinary needs. What room is there for vision, for daring ventures and far-sighted policy that can gauge the needs of a generation hence, all too likely to be overwhelmed by the prosaic necessities of to-day? If only we could do a large part of our administrative work in concert with men of other Churches, gaining inspiration and encouragement from such fellowship, and bringing back to the executive of our several societies the fruits of

collective experience! Such co-operation demands as its first prerequisite a very high spiritual level in the Churches that stand behind the Missionary Societies. Cold metal will not weld; and no practical steps towards Christian unity can be taken until all alike have learnt the meaning of the word attributed to the Master—'He that is near me is near the fire.'

But from economies of labour and money, from wiser methods and more far-sighted statesmanship on the part of the hard-working and devoted men who manage our Missionary Societies, we come to the problem that underlies our whole enterprise, the Home Base. Is the Church in Christian lands equal to the tremendous task that God has laid upon her? Let us ask the question in terms of the part of the missionary campaign carried on through a century by the Church to which this appeal is specially addressed: it can be easily adapted to the conditions of our sister organizations. In the *Minutes of Conference* for 1912 we are reported to have 690 ministers on our foreign field; and the Women's Auxiliary sends out 93 lady missionaries from this country. The total income of the two societies in 1911 was about £225,000—including what came from the mission field itself. To make a real and lasting impression on the world's heathenism we must all of us treble our agencies—an estimate utterly below the mark, but one that we may take for the sake of argument. Could the Wesleyan Methodist Church afford to raise yearly two-thirds of a million sterling, and find some 2,300 men and women willing to go abroad and worth sending? The question will raise an incredulous smile. Yet,

if we did, should we be surpassing the men of 1813? Under the awful strain of the Napoleonic War, in a country well-nigh bankrupt and drained of its best blood, they launched their great venture. In membership and in wealth, by all statistics that can be set down on the printed page, our resources distance theirs. We have spent on a single church building much more than a year's income of our Missionary Society. Every year we spend, in this country alone, upon improving and beautifying our chapels, and building new ones on a rising scale of goodliness and comfort, money that would endow our Missions up to the highest possible standard, were we content to worship in places comparable with those in which our brethren abroad gather for prayer and praise. The income I have suggested would only be some twenty-six shillings per member, including those on trial; and our multitude of deeply-attached adherents, not conforming to our special test of membership, would probably reduce that by one-half. Even apart from this, the average is lower than the thirty shillings per member contributed to Foreign Missions in the Society of Friends. There are thousands of our poorer members who give as much as that to the cause of God every year; and how many are there who could give ten or a hundred times as much and never know the luxury of sacrifice? Yes, the money is there, and it would be poured out in the wider service of the Kingdom, if once the heart of our people were 'strangely warmed.'

And the men and women for service—are they there? Could we send out to foreign work a company almost as numerous as the whole of our

home ministry, without impoverishing our countless agencies of evangelism in the towns and villages of Great Britain? Why, yes, of course—*if*—! If every member were a missionary at heart, if every preacher were a prophet speaking from lips touched with fire, if every hearer found in the house of God that religion is the one overwhelming reality of life. *If*—! why, if these things were so, the home membership itself would be doubled or trebled in a very little time. Once again, the question is answered instantly and obviously by making the bold assumption that history might repeat itself, and our ears hear the voice of God as our fathers heard it in great days of yore.

I started my last paragraph with the intention of asking very seriously how far our home Churches, of all denominations, approximate to-day to the level at which they must live if they are to win the people at home and the world outside. Long ago the apostle of the Gentiles wrote a letter to a Church in a prosperous commercial town, a letter circulated among several Churches and coming down to us by the name of the largest of them all. A Church that could read and assimilate the 'Epistle to the Ephesians' was assuredly in no low spiritual state. But Laodicea was a place where men grew rich and glutted with comfort; and by the end of that century, when Paul had long worn his martyr's crown, the Christians in that Manchester of Roman Asia were no longer ambitious to differ from their world. They received another apostolic message—how strangely different from the first! In it Christ speaks from His glory to men who bear His name and sign, but have lost all the power of His

religion. He compares them to the thin cascade of nauseous lukewarm water falling over the cliff that confronts the silence and the scanty ruins which once were Laodicea. It is the gravestone, as it were, of a Church that lives only by that terrible comparison which still shines in the white incrustations upon the cliff, undimmed by faint clouds of steam. As the letter closes, the picture changes, and comes home to our eyes as well as our thought through one of the greatest of modern sacred paintings. There stands the Saviour at the fast-closed door. No handle is seen, and the ivy that firmly clings to it proclaims that it had never been used. He whom they still call 'Lord! Lord!' may enter, if He will, with the motley crowd that presses in by another entrance, turned not to the silent forest of meditation but to the busy street. Not thus will He enter : ' He will be all in all, or He will be nothing.' The Church that compromises its differences with the world had far better not exist. ' I would thou wert cold ! ' For a merely nominal Christianity serves only as an opiate to conscience, while it is a perpetual scandal to men that are without. There was room for the waking of memory, for the longing after better days gone by, had those men openly relapsed into heathenism. But they were Christians still—orthodox in opinion and punctilious in worship. They had paid their fire insurance, and all was well ! It counted nothing with them that Laodicea was a permanent hindrance to the advance of the faith of Christ in all the country round.

In recalling this lurid picture of a peril that has realized itself all too often in the history of the Church, I need hardly say that I am not suggesting

any immediate application to the present state of religion in England. To assert this or anything like it would be a grotesque exaggeration. But though religion in all the Churches is manifestly at a temperature incomparably higher than in those dark days two hundred years ago, before Wesley came, it is also manifest that it is by no means at boiling-point. And for the purposes for which Christ ordained Christianity, nothing short of the boiling-point will serve. Water that would scald the engineer's hand may be perfectly useless for filling the cylinder with steam. And it is a very heavy pressure of steam that is needed for this task. There was no mistake about the pressure in the Reformation days, when the road of human progress had to be cut through those vast accumulations of rubbish into the liberty of a new era. As obvious was the explosive energy that triumphed over spiritual and moral degeneration in the time of the Methodist Revival. And when we think of the colossal difficulties among which the W.M.M.S. was started a century ago, we can certainly declare that Wesley's successors had not allowed the fire to burn low.

The question, then, is whether the Home Churches in countries which maintain the foreign propaganda of Protestant Christianity have sufficient steam-pressure for the uphill journey before them. The figure is helpful in many ways, for it reminds us of the vital fact that the same high pressure avails for the swifter and surer speeding of the lighter load to its destination. We hear often from men of the world, and sometimes even from men professing to hold and cherish the principles of Christianity, that

charity begins at home, that while there are heathens in England we have no business to spend our strength on the conversion of heathens in India, and so forth. The argument depends, of course, on the assumption that spiritual forces can be measured by 'common sense,' by the application of laws known to work without fail in the material world. But common sense itself would soon show that the analogy is bound to break down. It fails when we apply it to the immaterial side of human life, even apart from religion. Any one can see that the man whose maxim is 'Charity begins at home' normally shows less charity at home than the large-hearted man whose interests go far afield. Material wealth cannot be spent and retained at the same time. But love, the gold of the heart, is found to accumulate in proportion as it is prodigally expended. The familiar paradox of John Bunyan is dimly realized even by men who have never entered the realm in which it is an everyday principle:[1]

> There was a man—the world did think him mad—
> The more he gave away, the more he had.

Spiritual forces everywhere prove themselves to run more deeply when spread over a wider area. And what is imperfectly realizable among all the limitations of a world where selfishness still has great power, becomes abundantly clear when we enter the realm of religion. In the teaching of Jesus it is made constantly apparent that His kingdom is not of this world, but inverts the whole system of worldly precedence and denies every axiom of worldly wisdom. There the princes

have the motto '*Ich dien*'; the King is He who stooped to the death of a slave. Wealth is won by giving, power by yielding, conquest is achieved not by killing but by being killed. Charity at home attains its richest fullness by starting far away; the man whose eyes are in the ends of the earth alone has this wisdom of love for problems at his own door. A Christian accordingly cannot further Home Missions by concentrating on them the interest deliberately withdrawn from work abroad. In the material expression of such interest, of course, home and foreign evangelization may clash to a certain extent. The poor widow who has already put both her mites into the treasury for one part of God's work may afterwards find she has only her prayers to give to the other. The work will lose nothing thereby. But the enthusiast for the Kingdom of Christ who limits his enthusiasm to the work in his own corner is an impossible figure; the confession that interest in Foreign Missions is lacking is that of a man whose service at home is shown to be little worth. In pleading for a mighty revival of enthusiasm for the foreign work, we are really urging our people to cry to God for the one power that can bring revival of religion at home.

Instead of attempting any answer to the question whether religion at home is really on the ebb, and the Churches slowly losing that by which they live, I will advance further my plea for the general recognition of Foreign Missions as the crucial test of spiritual life. If we are to test the spiritual state of any Church by statistics, we shall, I am convinced, come nearer a true estimate by examining its foreign balance-sheet than by any other

method. Membership returns may be largely affected by changes in conditions. Expenditure on church building might even be in some circumstances an evidence of a subtler form of selfishness. Money given to Missions eliminates the lower motives which may mix unseen with our very giving to God. Its results are never to be under our eyes : we shall not enjoy the beauty of the church we have helped to build, or profit by the preaching of the missionary we support. If it is ' more blessed to give than to receive,' the blessedness of giving must be greatest where there is least return for our giving in benefits enjoyed by ourselves. A steady rise in missionary income, secured not by exceptional large gifts from the wealthy and generous, but by small increases evenly distributed throughout the membership, would be the irrefragable proof of vitality, outweighing almost any possible discouragement.

Alas ! we cannot comfort ourselves under disappointment by urging that this test contradicts the results of others. Edinburgh has not yet affected the Churches as a whole. In Mr. Oldham's summary,[1] from which we have quoted before, we read :

> In the matter of finance the prevailing note at the last annual meetings of the various British societies was one of relief. The relief, however, was due rather to the disappearance of a burden than to a well-grounded hope with regard to the future. The heavy deficits of recent years have been avoided. But the improved financial position of the societies has been due to strict limitation of expenditure, increases in legacies, utilization of special funds, and generous special contributions. The gross home income of

[1] *Internat. Review of Missions*, January, 1913, p. 69.

> the eight largest societies is only slightly increased, being £1,365,000 as against £1,363,638 for the preceding year. While some societies report the largest income of any normal year, there is this disquieting feature in the published accounts of almost all the societies, that subscriptions, donations, and collections as a rule show decreases. These decreases are slight in some cases, but are of the gravest significance, emphasizing as they do the trend towards stagnation. . . . There is no sign of any general broadening of the home base by an increase in the number of contributors or an improved scale of giving. The serious financial position of the societies has been righted, but the problem of properly financing the work has by no means been solved.

All this, be it remembered, in a time of growing prosperity, when the members of Christian Churches have had more money to give. Under conditions like these, what prospect is there that the golden opportunity will be seized and Christ effectively proclaimed in all countries of the earth? To accomplish this duty, the Church must awake to the fact that she is on the road that leads to Laodicea, must turn and flee for dear life from that City of Destruction. Her own salvation hangs always and utterly upon her zeal for the salvation of the world.

VIII

Through every paragraph of our survey we have found ourselves coming by different roads to one goal. The challenge of the non-Christian world will be answered when the Church is baptized with Holy Spirit and Fire. Every obstacle will be cleared away when the Day of Pentecost has fully

come. The obstinate apathy of the masses in Christian lands, the opposition of sincere thinkers or dilettante intellectuals, the rebellion of men to whom 'Puritan' is the last word of contempt and abuse—even these will be marvellously wrought upon when Christians go about the world with the look upon their face that tells men they have been with Jesus. How is this wonderful new life to be regained? Is our present insufficiency merely an ebb of the tide, which will go down further to dead low water, and then automatically turn, deaf to any human voice that bids it either stay its fall or refuse to rise?

To that question I have, of course, but one answer. It has been the answer of official Christendom from the first, expounded by theologians, practised by saints, and ignored by the vast majority of professed believers to the greatest proportion of its boundless significance. Pious Moslems converted to Christianity express astonishment that the endless formal prayers of their old faith answer to nothing at all visible in the community they have joined.[1] Alas! have we so forgotten our Master's precept and example? 'The harvest is plenteous, the labourers are few: *pray therefore!*'[2]

In a previous chapter I was giving one or two illustrations of the principle that experience is always bringing to us new resources in our Faith. A discovery is made, which inspires a new age and transforms the face of the earth. And it proves to be only the discovery that a truism is true, that

[1] Cf. *Internat. Review of Missions*, January, 1913, p. 115.

[2] I write under the grateful recollection of a very searching missionary sermon on this saying by a dear friend and comrade.

what we always knew by heart was actually a word that meant something. If the problem of world evangelization is going to be solved in our time, it will only be through the popularizing, as it were, of a discovery that the holiest of men and women have made in every age, and passionately commended to our deaf ears. There is one well-known Mission that has never advertised its needs, run into debt, or asked for money. It will book passages for half-a-dozen missionaries when there is no money to pay for them. And instead of even telling well-tried friends that those passages must be revoked unless money comes in, the leaders of the Mission meet quietly for prayer. The money always comes! Materialist psychology may be invited to explain how. Presumably the great goddess Chance would be invoked — the omnipotent power to whom materialists ancient and modern have always been content to bow. The Christian solution seems easier. 'A good man's inspired intercession has mighty power,' says James the Lord's brother.[1] How little can we realize what a tremendous force is wielded by the concentrated will of a man wholly convinced of the Supreme Reality before whom he stands, and bending all his deepest faculties in a mighty longing for an object 'inwrought' within his soul by the Spirit of God! A force as real as that which bears the electric message through the ether, and far more wonderful, is in the hands of God to direct at His will. Is it strange that it should prevail?

Describing the pre-eminent greatness of John the Baptist, our Lord singled out the fact that he first

[1] James v. 16: read 'inwrought' for the R.V. 'in its working.'

taught men to 'force on' the Kingdom of heaven.[1] He and those who entered into his teaching were not minded to wait passively for a heavenly inheritance that might or might not come after long ages: like bandits they would 'take it by force.' The original form and meaning of this saying cannot be recovered with certainty, but the paraphrase I have given seems to present the most probable view of it. It is interesting to turn from words preserved in the oldest New Testament record to their commentary on the last written page of the sacred Book. All things around us have upon them the stamp of decay, cries the prophet; what, then, should be the life of men who can see past the fleeting into the Eternal? By holiness in all their movements among men, by constant reverence and prayer before God, they are to 'await and hasten the advent of the day of God.'[2] A paradoxical combination, surely! No, not for those who understand. Waiting is the work of those who have obediently done man's part, and now confidently look for God to do His. The farmer ploughs and sows and harrows, and then 'waits for the earth's precious harvest.' He has nothing to do but have patience, until his field has received God's gift of rain. The great poet in his blindness and isolation, fallen on evil days and evil tongues, no longer able to serve his country as in the great days when in her name he could write words that shook Europe—what can he do till the time of his release? Patience speaks to him too—

> They also serve who only stand and wait.

[1] Matt. xi. 12. [2] 2 Pet. iii. 11 f.

It is the waiting of those who have done the will of God and have now to stand aside and watch for His salvation, Faith's harder task. They are not idle: they have to make their own life match the splendour of their Hope. 'Eager—spotless and without blame—in peace,' such are the notes that must be found in their character when the day shall dawn. And while they are thus 'waiting' they are all the time 'hastening' that day. The world has to be prepared for that royal Advent[1]; if righteousness is to 'dwell' in the new earth, it must first sojourn in the old one. All the power of a human soul that is permeated with the divine has to be directed upon human souls around, and on human souls far away; for the dim telepathic forces, the bare existence of which we are just learning to recognize, can carry that soul-power into regions sundered far in distance and in language. If the divine event tarries, it is 'the patience of our Lord,' who wills that all should be saved. They, then, who by the twin ministries of fervent evangelism and fervent prayer spend their lives in winning souls, are helping the purpose of God 'shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His Kingdom.'

The extent to which the Advent Hope filled the thought of Jesus Himself and of the Early Church has been the subject of one of the most fruitful theological debates of our time, and the debate is not yet over. One thing at any rate has become clearer than ever. Their conviction that the Advent of the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven

[1] The Greek word *Parousia* (2 Pet. iii. 12, &c.) was in pre-Christian Egypt and elsewhere a technical term for the state visit of a king to some place in his dominions.

was very near, and that they would see it with the eyes of their flesh, undeniably spurred Christian men to unparalleled effort for the spread of the Faith. 'The evangelization of the world in this generation' is a motto writ large over all their work. Their King's business required haste, for that generation was not to pass away until His will was done. The world for them was only the Roman Empire, but it was big enough! Yet the motto was no dream. Within the lifetime of those apostles the Empire *was* evangelized. There was a living Church of God in every district—in dilettante Athens and sensual Corinth, in imperial Rome and barbarous Lystra—composed of men and women for whom the duty of evangelism was the very law of their being. Before Rome awoke to the existence of a rival Empire that was 'turning the world upside down,' the Church was established far more securely than by any state law. The methods of Diocletian, followed out in Palestine under the direction of Saul of Tarsus, might have extinguished 'the name of Jesus of Nazareth,' and the modern world might never have heard how the stones had silenced a few thousand Stephens, and the cross rewarded the wild fanaticism of a small host of Peters. But Rome did not know how to use Saul, nor care to repress Paul—*animae magnae prodigum Paullum*[1]—till he had won a victory more decisive than that which his namesake refused to survive at Cannae. When Rome knew her danger, the Church was too numerous and ubiquitous to be blotted out by massacre. Her providential escape was due to her conviction that

[1] Horace, *Odes* I. xii. 38: L. Aemilius Paullus 'threw away his noble life when the Carthaginian overcame.'

the time was short—as in truth it was, though the Advent was not to be after the manner she expected! She received her talent from her Master's dying hand, and '*straightway* went and traded with the same.' Had she said, 'My Lord delayeth His coming,' that talent would never have emerged from its grave to be used by her hands for Him.

Now the motto which I have attributed to the Early Church is, as far as its language goes, of very modern coining. I was privileged to be present myself when it was accepted by a great company of Christian students gathered together in Liverpool from all parts of the world; nor was I young enough to be of their number except as a sympathizer. Doubtless to the average Christian outsider the watchword seemed only the impossible dream of hopeful youth. But its words crystallized into a phrase the whole spirit of the Apostolic Age; and for myself, having watched the Student Movement from its very birth—for Moody and Sankey's mission in Cambridge in 1882 was of all single causes the mightiest—I have always wondered at the wisdom that has guided it throughout, even more than at the enthusiasm, natural to the young, that has made it a world-wide power. For if only the whole Church were fired with the spirit that has wrought mightily in that movement, the evangelization of the world in the lifetime of the students who founded their Volunteer Missionary Union would be wholly possible and almost easy. But whatever the Churches might do or fail to do, the student's 'watchword' meant for him a pledge that his own life and all his powers were offered at God's call to be spent for the Kingdom. Thucydides somewhere

describes a battle in which the feeling was so keen that every combatant thought things were going badly where he was not fighting himself. Something of that spirit animates the volunteer who goes forth with that watchword in his soul. He is not answerable for others' zeal. But so far as in him lies—and who shall say what does not lie within the range of a young life utterly surrendered to Him with whom all things are possible?—the world shall be evangelized before he comes to die. 'With God be the rest!'

I have said that the Student Volunteer watchword expresses the spirit of the Apostolic Age in modern words. But, after all, that age contrived to concentrate all the meaning of it into still shorter compass. It was in the language of Canaan, preserved even in a Gentile Church like that of Corinth for the sacred association of its sound, and for preservation from the ears of the profane. *Maranatha*, by slight change in intonation, was either a creed or a prayer. 'Our Lord cometh' and 'Our Lord, come!' are both combined in the solemn close of the Revelation. And the watchword was no cry of lazy 'saints,' longing for the destruction of their enemies and their own deliverance from this naughty world. They knew that ere that day the Gospel of the Kingdom must be proclaimed to all the nations, and they were only eager that the condition might be speedily fulfilled. In the place where Paul quotes the watchword he sets it after the terrible words, 'If any loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema'—cut off from a missionary Church that has no room for the lukewarm. He will be nearer salvation in the outer darkness than at the

King's table without the garment of love and praise!

Can we recover for our own time the tremendous energy of that war-cry? In our day, unhappily, the watchword has passed largely into the guardianship of cranks and visionaries, who have lost the Maranatha of the first century in the Chiliasm of the second. Ordinary sane Christians only shrug their shoulders when the 'millennium' is mentioned, with all the weary, stupid efforts at telling 'times and seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority.' But Maranatha does not come to us from the 'limited intelligence' of Papias—as Eusebius put it—but from the mighty mind of Paul. Nor does it mean that we should be daily watching the skies for the sign of the Son of Man. Our eyes are better occupied below, looking for knightly quests whereby we may make the world ready for His coming. Yet, for all that, we make a great mistake if we think we can dispense with the essential otherworldliness of the Christian Faith. No material progress will ever cleanse the Augean stable of this world sufficiently to make it a site for the New Jerusalem. Even material considerations prove to us that we have not here an abiding city. However marvellously science may increase the productivity of the soil, or devise unheard-of resources for feeding the multitudes upon the surface of this little planet, the day must surely come when Mother Earth can no longer provide for her brood. And before that day something may happen to our sun, as almost yearly happens to other suns in the depths of space, causing a hitherto invisible point of light to blaze out into a new star. To us such an outburst would mean, of course, that in literal truth the heavens

would catch fire and be dissolved, and the earth and the works that are therein vanish even more suddenly than the apocalyptist dreamed. Surely, however certain we may be that the catastrophe is not likely to be in our time, still more certain that the threatened famine on an overcrowded earth will not come for ages—not, perhaps, till the very cooling of the sun brings disaster from another quarter—yet we are bound to confess that our race is a race of sojourners after all. Must not the Theist go on to argue that God has some better place than an earthly paradise to be the home of His perfected creation?

I need not develop this argument further, or spend time on the proof which comes from our study of facts lying deeper than material conditions. Do we really see reason to hope that centuries hence the Church herself on earth will have fully learnt the simple code of the Kingdom—that we must love God utterly, and our neighbour as much as ourselves? And even if in all her members the Church is practising that code before the world, will human nature here be so changed that all men will yield without a struggle to the appeal? Will the ape and the tiger have died in man, and Borgias and Leopolds cease to flourish? I can find no warrant for such an optimism in Christian prophecy, nor in any promises that scientific sociology may hold out. Even if such a golden age should dawn, we could only ask why a hard fate compelled those Borgias and Leopolds to be born in an age that had no magnetic force to drag them into righteousness. The Kingdom of God would stand for the future, but its golden streets would imperfectly hide the blood and shame

and tears of men whose damnation it was that they were born a few millennia or hundreds of millennia too soon. Not by such a heaven could the ways of God to men be finally justified beyond appeal. Paradise Regained must be in a world where birth and death alike are no more, and the material is the passive instrument of the spiritual, and never its lord.

It is, of course, to such a world that our Lord's words and those of His first followers ever point. Nothing less than a New Earth will satisfy the conditions of the Promise. This present world is passing away, and the lust thereof. It is a training-school, a testing-place, for those who shall be accounted worthy to attain unto that world. Here we are like the slaves in the parable, set to the trivial task of trading on a capital of three or four pounds sterling, but destined to be amazingly rewarded for faithfulness and resource by the gift of freedom and authority. So we, if faithful, are to be there promoted to tasks as incomparably vaster than those of this life as was the governorship of a Decapolis than the pedlar's trade of a slave. The light of this great Future shines upon our path to-day, and he who sees it most clearly will be foremost in the work that is at last to bring the Kingdom in.

The reminder I have just been recalling is peculiarly needed by us of the Evangelical Free Churches. The pious Roman may cherish his pessimist outlook on the world within the cloister where he has buried himself for meditation and prayer. We have no place for the cloister in our creed. We fervently believe that God has given

us our place in the thick of the fight; and we are assured, like Socrates of old, that it were unutterable shame for us to desert our post and flee. But fighting as we are by the side of men whose outlook is on this world only, and their hope in a progress that shall bring peace on earth, we are in some danger of confounding our ideal with theirs. Beyond all other men we need to be other-worldly, heavenly-minded, with our treasure laid up in the place where no moth or rust consumes, and no demon of disillusionment breaks in to steal our life's hope. We need not fear that other-worldliness will make us less eager to mend this world. We fight with fleshly lusts, because they 'campaign against the soul'—the one part of man that is meant to see the Kingdom of God, and therefore is beyond any exchanging with treasures of the earth. We strive to destroy sweating and swilling, because such environments make it so fearfully difficult for a human spirit to be made ready for service in the realm of light. We preach the Gospel to the heathen, because it will give them a mighty uplift towards that holiness without which no man can see the Lord.

The call of this other-worldliness is a call to understand and practise a too-much-neglected grace, standing half forgotten between its sister graces in the Christian triad. We are saved by Faith, we know, and we are saved unto Love; but we seldom remember that 'we were saved by Hope.' Appreciation of the difference between Faith and Hope may help us to realize the importance of the latter, which takes a far greater part in the New Testament than it does in our conceptions

of religion. We might express the difference by adapting Dryden's phrase: Hope 'raised a mortal to the skies'; Faith 'drew an angel down.' Hope is the Sunday grace, and Faith the weekday. The one lifts us into the Holy Mount, where it is good to be, and we see the pattern of Divine Perfection which we are to copy on earth as exactly as we may. The other comes out of the Unseen to be our companion, assuring us hourly that we are following no phantom glory when we press on toward the distant dawn. Faith confidently declares 'Our Lord cometh,' though now she sees Him not. Hope has the rapt vision of the Son of Man, standing at the right hand of God, and cries, 'Our Lord, come!' Faith holds 'the title-deeds of things hoped for, the proof of things unseen.'[1] Hope, fixed on Him to whom we are to be like when we see Him as He is, enables us to purify ourselves even as He is pure.

If this is the function of Hope, we can realize how Hope can 'save' the Church and all its individual members. 'We are waiting'—waiting a century after the Ascension, waiting still to-day, and likely to wait much longer—'for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.' How long the interval that separates us from the glorious Future, we know not, and we know we do not know. Be the interval long or short, our daily conduct is determined by the call to live worthily of our franchise in the City which Hope's optic glass has given us to see. The perspective of our life is determined by a vanishing-point fixed far away

[1] Heb. xi. 1, according to what I believe to be the most probable translation. See my note in *Expositor*, December, 1903, p. 438 f.

and yet very near: as with Browning's Lazarus, the trifles become momentous and the great things small. And beyond all other duties, overwhelmingly peremptory in its urgent distinctness, sounds the call that forbids us to 'be saved alone': we must by all means win some to be our comrades in the vaster service of the Kingdom on high. It is not yet made manifest what we shall be, nor when. But with those who have fellowship with us in the blessed hope, we wait on God's good time. The Master will come again, as He came before, in 'the fullness of the years,' when through His abiding Presence with His servants He has accomplished His new 'preparation of the Gospel.' Meanwhile we 'await and hasten the Advent' of our hope; and in a world of indifferent or hostile men know our fellows by the watchword in the tongue that only the citizens of heaven can understand.

Let us leave off on this last great word of Scripture, that tells us what is the goal of creation, the destiny of Man. Righteousness here is too often an ineffectual angel, tarrying for a while, but soon driven back to a world where she is at home. There she will be enthroned for ever, and none will dispute her sway. This enthronement of righteousness is the fit climax of New Testament Scripture, for it is the supreme purpose of all religion. We have traced the long, slow, upward progress—slow and painful because nothing supremely great can be born without pangs. We have seen how through the many myriad years Man has groped after God, never deserted by Him who only would not make the finding easy because the seeking was to be blessed. We found religion, even in its rudimentary stages,

the providential guardian of all man's earliest strivings after social righteousness. We found new evidence of the witness borne to God by earnest and high-souled men of every tribe and kindred and tongue. And so we reached at last the consummation in the coming of Him who shall gather from far all the scattered limbs of Truth, shall 'bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection.' In Him we see the Power that can not only give to men the perfect knowledge that at the last shall solve all the problems of existence, but endue their will with perfect resistance to every form of evil, and thus set the crown upon the whole creation of God. Having learned obedience through what he has suffered in all the long ages of wrong and sorrow, Man shall know that God's Will is his peace; and in that knowledge shall go forth into the unlimited service of the new world where righteousness dwelleth for evermore.

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